



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

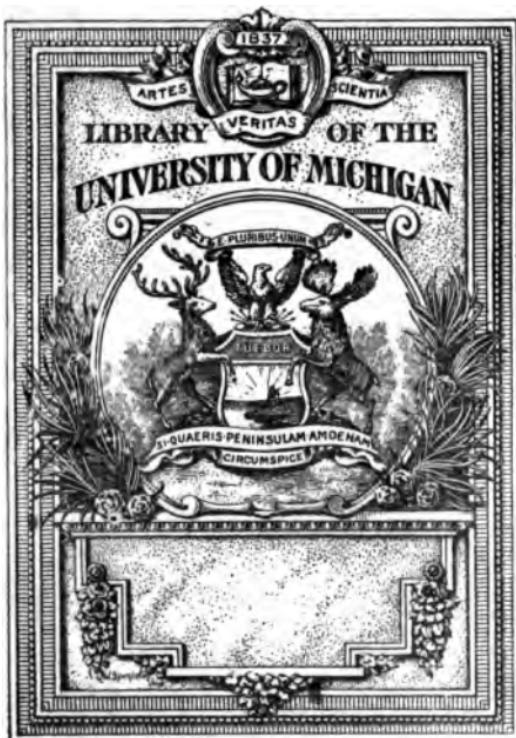
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

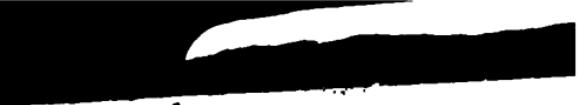
A 400932

# GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY



EDITED BY  
FRANCIS W. HALSEY



 E  
193  
H2



[REDACTED]

100-000000



HARRIET BEECHER STOWE



EDMUND CLARENCE  
STEDMAN



CARL SCHURZ



JAMES SCHOULER

# GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

DESCRIBED BY FAMOUS WRITERS  
FROM COLUMBUS TO ROOSEVELT

Edited, with Introductions and Explanatory Notes

By **FRANCIS W. HALSEY**

*Associate Editor of "The World's Famous Orations"; Associate Editor of "The Best of the World's Classics"; author of "The Old New York Frontier," etc.*

---

PATRONS' EDITION. IN TEN VOLUMES  
ILLUSTRATED

---

Vol. VII  
**SLAVERY AND THE MEXICAN WAR**  
1840—1860

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY  
NEW YORK AND LONDON

COPYRIGHT, 1912, BY  
FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY  
[Printed in the United States of America]

## INTRODUCTION

---

*(Slavery and the Mexican War.)*

Exactly twenty years had now gone by since the Missouri Compromise became a law. That famous instrument for promoting tranquillity between the North and South had been followed by internal peace as to slavery; but it has quite another distinction for services rendered to the Republic. More to it than to any other cause is probably due that long period of national repose in which undisturbed were ushered in western expansion, new and more expeditious transportation methods, manufacturing enterprises, the sewing-machine, the rotary printing-press, and machine implements for farming.

Coincident with these movements new problems of great peril to the peace of the States were soon to arise. Satisfied as the South had been with the Missouri Compromise when passed, it learned eventually that in the workings of the compromise the North was the chief gainer. This was in part because the North grew more rapidly, with its people small energetic farmers and small industrial

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

producers, and its industries widely diversified; whereas in the South the people, by a costly system of slave labor, were large producers, and their sole industry was agriculture. With the opening of great highways westward, there had set in a development for the North that was not paralleled in the South. None in 1820 could have foreseen this, just as none foresaw the oncoming of the new age of mechanical inventions.

In such conditions was the assault made on those Mexican lands we now know as Texas. This was not wholly a movement by slaveholders seeking to extend slavery, but one also of land speculators who held scrip and desired their lands located. Moreover the North had plenty of room in which to expand; the South had little. Expansion in the South had to come; room had to be found for it, and when opposition was encountered from Mexico, and followed by a massacre in the Alamo, nothing could stay the enthusiasm with which the southwestern frontiersmen went into the Battle of San Jacinto, where was fixt the destiny of Texas as a future integral part of the Union open to slavery. The war with Mexico that followed as a consequence of the annexation of Texas was long fore-

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

seen, and by the frontiersman, if not by the Federal administration, was desired. Its conclusion secured to the Union a vast country in the Southwest and Far West, out of which five States and parts of two others have since been created. Except for California, which did not come directly from the defeat of Mexico, that war added an enormous area which soon became open to slavery.

Almost coincident with these events came the final settlement of the Oregon boundary, with new emigration to Oregon, and in 1848 the organization of that country into a territory embracing a far greater area than what we now call Oregon. By this addition of non-slaveholding territory much was done to counterbalance the acquisition made by Southern interests in the Southwest. Political leaders in both sections however continued far from tranquil. Within two years from the conclusion of peace with Mexico, another compromise, the one which bears the name of Henry Clay, was put through Congress. This measure in the main would have been acceptable in the North but for the Fugitive Slave Law included in it. Under this law, enforcing the arrest and return of escaped slaves and immediately and aggressively put into

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

effect, slaves were to be considered as any other lost or stolen property. Two notable outcomes of its enforcement ensued—one the “underground railway” by which Northern Abolitionists assisted escaping slaves to reach Canada, the other a book which, more than all the speeches of agitators and all the preaching from pulpits, made anti-slavery sentiment in the North a political rather than a social force—Mrs. Stowe’s “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”

Four years later another act of Congress pushed headlong by further steps the inevitable conflict at arms—the famous Kansas-Nebraska bill, with its “squatter sovereignty” declaration, the contrivance of Stephen A. Douglas, by which the Kansas-Nebraska territory became open alike to slavery and to freedom under a local-option system, and into which the operation of the Fugitive Slave Law was extended. Out of this bill, which amounted to a repeal of the Missouri Compromise, came war in Kansas, with John Brown as a leader. Out of it also came the formation of a great party which for two generations was to dominate the affairs of the nation—that party first called “anti-Nebraska men” and afterward Republicans. These men planted themselves squarely on the principle

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

of the Wilmot Proviso, a despised measure which had failed to pass both houses of Congress, but in that "stone rejected of the builders" was contained a principle which in later years was established as an outcome of an awful civil war.

At this period the Abolition movement, after eleven years of activity, had measurably overcome the strong opposition it had formerly encountered in the North and had drawn within its folds many eminent and far-seeing men. It found a powerful ally, one which eventually was to absorb it, in the Republican party. Then came the Dred Scott Decision, delivered in 1857 by Chief Justice Taney, which more than all other events, save perhaps the firing on Fort Sumter, precipitated actual war. Its immediate consequence was that a vast territory beyond the Mississippi, now comprising more than a third of the total area of the United States, which had been open to slavery either by the Compromise of 1850 or by the Kansas-Nebraska act, was actually confirmed to slavery.

The decision, in its immediate aspects, was a great victory for the South. But the larger, distant view shows clearly how it became the undoing of the South. Because of it Abraham Lincoln, in

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

his Illinois debate with Stephen A. Douglas, was able to force Douglas into a dilemma from which Douglas extricated himself in a manner unwelcome to the South, and which made him as a candidate for the Presidency impossible to the South. Hence the famous split in the Democratic party in the Charleston convention of 1860, and the nomination afterward of Breckenridge at Baltimore.

Here now were broken ranks in the Democratic forces which, except in two Presidential elections, had been dominant in national councils for six decades. Except for that split, Lincoln could not have been elected. Because of it, his election became, for the combined anti-slavery and Union forces, a signal triumph. Had there been no Dred Scott Decision, Lincoln's election probably could not have taken place. The war in that case must have been postponed, possibly for half a generation, possibly for longer years, during which the onward march of industrial improvements and population through the North and distant West, forcing still further backward the industrial growth of the South, might have given to the next half decade of a thousand battle-fields a far different history.

F. W. H.

## CONTENTS

### VOL. VII—SLAVERY AND THE MEXICAN WAR

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION. By the Editor . . . . .	v
THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS (1837-1845). By James Schouler . . . . .	3
THE EMIGRATION THAT SAVED OREGON (1842- 1843). By Thomas H. Benton . . . . .	10
DICKENS'S FIRST VISIT (1842). His Own Ac- count in Letters to Friends at Home . . . . .	14
“FIFTY-FOUR—FORTY OR FIGHT” (1844). By James G. Blaine . . . . .	26
MORSE'S FIRST TELEGRAPH LINE (1844):	
I. By Alonzo B. Cornell . . . . .	36
II. Morse's Own Account of the First Suc- cessful Line . . . . .	44
HOWE'S INVENTION OF THE SEWING-MACHINE (1845) . . . . .	48
THE ACQUISITION OF CALIFORNIA (1846). Fre- mont's Successful Invasion. By Thomas H. Benton . . . . .	53
THE MORMON MIGRATION TO UTAH (1846-1848). By William A. Linn . . . . .	61
DR. MORTON'S INTRODUCTION OF ANESTHETIC ETHER (1846):	
I. The “Encyclopedia Britannica” Account . . . . .	70
II. Dr. Morton's Own Account of His Ex- periment on Himself . . . . .	72
HOW WAR WITH MEXICO WAS DECLARED (1846). By James G. Blaine . . . . .	77
THE STORMING OF CHAPULTEPEC AND THE ENTRY INTO MEXICO (1847). By General Winfield Scott . . . . .	83
THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN CALIFORNIA (1847). By John S. Hittell . . . . .	88

## THE EMIGRATION THAT SAVED OREGON

(1842—1843)

BY THOMAS H. BENTON<sup>1</sup>

The great event of carrying the Anglo-Saxon race to the shore of the Pacific Ocean, and planting that race firmly on that sea, took place at this time, beginning in 1842, and largely increasing in 1843. It was not an act of the Government, leading the people and protecting them; but, like all the other great emigrations and settlements of that race on our continent, it was the act of the people, going forward without government aid or countenance, establishing their possession, and compelling the government to follow with its shield, and spread it over them. So far as the action of the Government was concerned, it operated to endanger our title to the Columbia, to prevent emigration, and to incur the loss of the country. . . .

<sup>1</sup> From Benton's "Thirty Years' View."

The English claim to Oregon was based chiefly on the visit of Drake in 1579 (see Volume I, page 156), the visit of Captain Cook in 1778, and that of Vancouver, who explored the coast in 1793. The American claims were based on the discovery of the Columbia River by Captain Robert Gray in 1791 (see Volume IV, page 65), on the Louisiana Purchase, and on the Lewis and Clark explorations. A boundary line of 49 degrees had been fixt upon by a convention between the United States and Great Britain in 1818, for the region as far west as the Rocky Mountains. Beyond that point the territory *was to be open to both parties for ten years without*

---

## EMIGRATION THAT SAVED OREGON

---

The title to the country being endangered by the acts of the Government, the saving of it devolved upon the people—and they saved it. In 1842, incited by numerous newspaper publications, upward of a thousand American emigrants went to the country, making their long pilgrimage overland from the frontiers of Missouri, with their wives and children, their flocks and herds, their implements of husbandry and weapons of defense—traversing the vast inclined plane to the base of the Rocky Mountains, crossing that barrier (deemed impassable by Europeans) and descending the wide slope which declines from the mountains to the Pacific. Six months would be consumed in this journey, filled with hardships, beset by dangers from savage hostility, and only to be prosecuted

prejudice to the claims of either. By a convention of 1827, joint occupation of this territory was continued indefinitely, but was terminable at the option of either party on twelve months' notice.

The "Oregon question" that grew out of this situation was frequently before Congress from 1820 until finally settled in 1844. Serious American immigration began about 1832, and became more active in 1836, under Marcus Whitman's work as a missionary. In 1845 the population was estimated at 30,000. Meanwhile, the British immigration had been small. It was confined mainly to trappers attached to the Hudson Bay Company. Americans believed that the best method of gaining permanent possession of Oregon was through immigration.

Whitman was a missionary from Massachusetts, sent out by the American Board. Owing to friction and quarrels at the Oregon mission, the board in 1842, after Whitman had been six years in the country, decided to discontinue the southern part of his work. Whitman promptly started east in the dead of winter. After much privation, he reached Boston in March, 1843, and prevailed upon the board to reverse its decision. The new and greater stream of emigration described by Benton as saving Oregon took place during this critical period.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

in caravans of strength and determination. The Burnets and Applegates from Missouri were among the first leaders, and in 1843, some two thousand more joined the first emigration.

To check these bold adventurers was the object of the Government: to encourage them, was the object of some Western members of Congress, on whom (in conjunction with the people) the task of saving the Columbia evidently devolved. These members were ready for their work, and promptly began. . . . An American settlement grew up at the mouth of the Columbia. Conventional agreements among themselves answered the purpose of laws. A colony was planted—had planted itself—and did not intend to retire from its position—and did not. It remained and grew; and that colony of self-impulsion, without the aid of government, and in spite of all its blunders, saved the Territory of Oregon to the United States: one of the many events which show how little the wisdom of government has to do with great events which fix the fate of countries.

Connected with this emigration, and auxiliary to it, was the first expedition of Lieutenant Fremont to the Rocky Mountains, and undertaken and completed in the summer of 1842—upon its outside view the conception of the Government, but in fact conceived without its knowledge, and executed upon solicited orders, of which the design was unknown. Lieutenant Fremont<sup>2</sup> was a young officer, appointed in the topographical corps from the class of citizens by President Jackson upon the recommendation of Mr. Poinsett, Secretary at

<sup>2</sup>John C. Fremont, afterward known as "the pathfinder," and the Republican candidate for President in 1856.

---

## EMIGRATION THAT SAVED OREGON

---

War. He did not enter the army through the gate of West Point, and was considered an intrusive officer by the graduates of that institution. Having, before his appointment, assisted for two years the learned astronomer, Mr. Nicollet, in his great survey of the country between the Missouri and Mississippi, his mind was trained to such labor; and instead of hunting comfortable berths about the towns and villages, he solicited employment in the vast regions beyond the Mississippi.

Colonel Abert, the chief of the corps, gave him an order to go to the frontier beyond the Mississippi. That order did not come up to his views. After receiving it he carried it back, and got it altered, and the Rocky Mountains inserted as an object of his exploration, and the South Pass in those mountains named as a particular point to be examined, and its position fixt by him. It was through this pass that the Oregon emigration crossed the mountains, and the exploration of Lieutenant Fremont had the double effect of fixing an important point in the line of the emigrants' travel, and giving them encouragement from the apparent interest which the Government took in their enterprise. At the same time the Government, that is, the executive administration, knew nothing about it. The design was conceived by the young lieutenant: the order for its execution was obtained, upon solicitation, from his immediate chief—importing, of course, to be done by his order, but an order which had its conception elsewhere.

## DICKENS'S FIRST VISIT

(1842)

### HIS OWN ACCOUNT IN LETTERS TO FRIENDS AT HOME<sup>1</sup>

During the whole voyage the weather had been unprecedentedly bad, the wind for the most part dead against them, the wet intolerable, the sea horribly disturbed, the days dark, and the nights fearful. On the previous Monday night it had blown a hurricane, beginning at five in the afternoon and raging all night.

As his first American experience is very lightly glanced at in the *Notes*,<sup>2</sup> a fuller picture will perhaps be welcome. "As the Cunard boats [in Boston] have a wharf of their own at the custom-house, and that a narrow one, we [wrote Dickens] were a long time (an hour at least) working in. I was standing in full fig on the paddle-box beside the captain, staring about me, when suddenly, long before we were moored to the wharf, a dozen men came leaping on board at the peril of their lives, with great bundles of newspapers under their arms; worsted comforters (very much the worse for wear) round their necks; and so forth. 'Aha!' says I, 'this is like our London Bridge'; believing, of

<sup>1</sup> From Forster's "Life of Dickens." By permission of the English publishers, Chapman & Hall. Forster was Dickens's intimate friend and authorized biographer.

<sup>2</sup> "The American Notes."

---

## DICKENS'S FIRST VISIT

---

course, that these visitors were newsboys. But what do you think of their being editors? And what do you think of their tearing violently up to me and beginning to shake hands like madmen? Oh! if you could have seen how I wrung their wrists! And if you could but know how I hated one man in very dirty gaiters, and with very protruding upper teeth, who said to all comers after him, 'So you've been introduced to our friend Dickens—eh?' There was one among them, tho, who really was of use; a Doctor S., editor of the \_\_\_\_\_. He ran off here (two miles at least), and ordered rooms and dinner. And in course of time Kate, and I, and Lord Mulgrave (who was going back to his regiment at Montreal on Monday, and had agreed to live with us in the meanwhile) sat down in a spacious and handsome room to a very handsome dinner, bating peculiarities of putting on table, and had forgotten the ship entirely. A Mr. Alexander, to whom I had written from England promising to sit for a portrait, was on board directly we touched the land, and brought us here in his carriage. Then, after sending a present of most beautiful flowers, he left us to ourselves, and we thanked him for it."

What further he had to say of that week's experience finds its first public utterance here. "How can I tell you," he continues, "what has happened since that first day? How can I give you the faintest notion of my reception here; of the crowds that pour in and out the whole day; of the people that line the streets when I go out; of the cheering when I went to the theater; of the copies of verses, letter of congratulation, welcomes of all kinds, balls, dinners, assemblies without end?"

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

There is to be a public dinner to me here in Boston, next Tuesday, and great dissatisfaction has been given to the many by the high price (three pounds sterling each) of the tickets. There is to be a ball next Monday week at New York, and 150 names appear on the list of the committee. There is to be a dinner in the same place, in the same week, to which I have had an invitation with every known name in America appended to it. But what can I tell you about any of these things which will give you the slightest notion of the enthusiastic greeting they give me, or the cry that runs through the whole country? I have had delegations from the Far West, who have come from more than two thousand miles' distance: from the lakes, the rivers, the backwoods, the log houses, the cities, factories, villages, and towns. Authorities from nearly all the States have written to me. I have heard from the universities, Congress, Senate, and bodies, public and private, of every sort and kind. 'It is no nonsense, and no common feeling,' wrote Dr. Channing to me yesterday. 'It is all heart. There never was, and never will be, such a triumph.' And it is a good thing, is it not, . . . to find those fancies it has given me and you the greatest satisfaction to think of, at the core of it all? It makes my heart quieter, and me a more retiring, sober, tranquil man, to watch the effect of those thoughts in all this noise and hurry, even than if I sat, pen in hand, to put them down for the first time. I feel, in the best aspects of this welcome, something of the presence and influence of that spirit which directs my life, and through a heavy sorrow has pointed upward with unchanging finger for more than four years past. And if I

---

## DICKENS'S FIRST VISIT

---

know my heart, not twenty times this praise would move me to an act of folly." . . .

His second letter, radiant with the same kindly warmth that gave always preeminent charm to his genius, was dated from the Carlton Hotel, New York, on the 14th of February, but its only allusion of any public interest was to the beginning of his agitation of the question of international copyright.\* He went to America with no express intention of starting this question in any way, and certainly with no belief that such remark upon it as a person in his position could alone be expected to make would be resented strongly by any sections of the American people. But he was not long left in doubt on this head. He had spoken upon it twice publicly, "to the great indignation of some of the editors here, who are attacking me for so doing, right and left." On the other hand, all the best men had assured him that, if only at once followed up in England, the blow struck might bring about a change in the law; and, yielding to the pleasant hope that the best men could be a match for the worst, he urged me to enlist on his side what force I could, and in particular, as he had made Scott's claim his war-cry, to bring Lockhart into the field. I could not do much, but I did what I could.

Three days later he began another letter; and, as this will be entirely new to the reader, I shall print it as it reached me, with only such omission of matter concerning myself as I think it my duty, however reluctantly, to make throughout these ex-

\* Dickens's works were all published in this country without copyright protection. Whatever sums he received from their sales were paid by the publishers voluntarily.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

tracts: "We left Boston on the fifth, and went away with the governor of the city to stay till Monday at his house at Worcester. He married a sister of Bancroft's, and another sister of Bancroft's went down with us. The village of Worcester is one of the prettiest in New England. . . . On Monday morning at nine o'clock we started again by railroad and went on to Springfield, where a deputation of two were waiting, and everything was in readiness that the utmost attention could suggest. Owing to the mildness of the weather, the Connecticut River was 'open,' *videlicet* not frozen, and they had a steamboat ready to carry us on to Hartford; thus saving a land-journey of only twenty-five miles, but on such roads at this time of year that it takes nearly twelve hours to accomplish! The boat was very small, the river full of floating blocks of ice, and the depth where we went (to avoid the ice and the current) not more than a few inches.

"After two hours and a half of this queer traveling, we got to Hartford. There, there was quite an English inn; except in respect of the bedrooms, which are always uncomfortable; and the best committee of management that has yet presented itself. They kept us more quiet, and were more considerate and thoughtful, even to their own exclusion, than any I have yet had to deal with. Kate's face being horribly bad, I determined to give her a rest here; and accordingly wrote to get rid of my engagement at New Haven, on that plea. We remained in this town until the eleventh: holding a formal levee every day for two hours, and receiving on each from two hundred to three hundred people. At five o'clock on the afternoon

---

## DICKENS'S FIRST VISIT

---

of the eleventh, we set off (still by railroad) for New Haven, which we reached about eight o'clock. The moment we had had tea, we were forced to open another levee for the students and professors of the college (the largest in the States), and the townspeople. I suppose we shook hands, before going to bed, with considerably more than five hundred people; and I stood, as a matter of course, the whole time. . . .

"I was delighted to find on board a Mr. Felton<sup>4</sup> whom I had known at Boston. He is the Greek professor at Cambridge, and was going on to the ball and dinner. Like most men of his class whom I have seen, he is a most delightful fellow—unaffected, hearty, genial, jolly; quite an Englishman of the best sort. We drank all the porter on board, ate all the cold pork and cheese, and were very merry indeed. I should have told you, in its proper place, that both at Hartford and New Haven a regular bank was subscribed, by these committees, for *all* my expenses. No bill was to be got at the bar, and everything was paid for. But as I would on no account suffer this to be done, I stoutly and positively refused to budge an inch until Mr. Q. should have received the bills from the landlord's own hands, and paid them to the last farthing. Finding it impossible to move me, they suffered me, most unwillingly, to carry the point.

"About half-past 2 we arrived here [New York]. In half an hour more, we reached this hotel, where a very splendid suite of rooms was prepared for us; and where everything is very comfortable, and no doubt (as at Boston) *enormously* dear. Just as we sat down to dinner, David Colden made his

<sup>4</sup>Cornelius C. Felton, afterward president of Harvard.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

appearance; and when he had gone, and we were taking our wine, Washington Irving came in alone, with open arms. And here he stopt, until ten o'clock at night." (Through Lord Jeffrey,<sup>5</sup> with whom he was connected by marriage, and Maccready, of whom he was the cordial friend, we already knew Mr. Colden; and his subsequent visits to Europe led to many years' intimate intercourse, greatly enjoyed by us both.) "Having got so far, I shall divide my discourse into four points. First, the ball. Secondly, some slight specimens of a certain phase of character in the Americans. Thirdly, international copyright. Fourthly, my life here, and projects to be carried out while I remain.

"Firstly, the ball. It came off last Monday (vide pamphlet.) 'At a quarter-past 9, exactly' (I quote the printed order of proceeding), we were waited upon by 'David Colden, Esquire, and General George Morris'; habited, the former in full ball costume, the latter in the full-dress uniform of Heaven knows what regiment of militia. The General took Kate, Colden gave his arm to me, and we proceeded down stairs to a carriage at the door, which took us to the stage-door of the theater, greatly to the disappointment of an enormous crowd who were besetting the main door and making a most tremendous hullabaloo.

"The scene on our entrance was very striking. There were three thousand people present in full dress; from the roof to the floor, the theater was decorated magnificently; and the light, glitter, glare, show, noise, and cheering, baffle my descriptive powers. We were walked in through the cen-

<sup>5</sup> Francis, Lord Jeffrey, long editor of the *Edinburgh Review*.

---

## DICKENS'S FIRST VISIT

---

ter of the center dress-box, the front whereof was taken out for the occasion; so to the back of the stage, where the Mayor and other dignitaries received us; and we were then paraded all round the enormous ballroom, twice, for the gratification of the many-headed. That done, we began to dance—Heaven knows how we did it, for there was no room. And we continued dancing until, being no longer able even to stand, we slipt away quietly, and came back to the hotel. All the documents connected with this extraordinary festival (quite unparalleled here) we have preserved; so you may suppose that on this head alone we shall have enough to show you when we come home. The bill of fare for supper is, in its amount and extent, quite a curiosity. . . .

"The newspapers were, if possible, unusually loquacious; and in their accounts of me, and my seeings, sayings, and doings on the Saturday night and Sunday before, they describe my manner, mode of speaking, dressing, and so forth. In doing this, they report that I am a very charming fellow (of course), and have a very free and easy way with me; 'which,' say they, 'at first amused a few fashionables'; but soon pleased them exceedingly. Another paper, coming after the ball, dwells upon its splendor and brilliancy; hugs itself and its readers upon all that Dickens saw, and winds up by gravely expressing its conviction that Dickens was never in such society in England as he has seen in New York, and that its high and striking tone can not fail to make an indelible impression on his mind! For the same reason I am always represented, whenever I appear in public, as being 'very pale': 'apparently thunderstruck'; and utterly

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

confounded by all I see. You recognize the queer vanity which is at the root of all this? I have plenty of stories in connection with it to amuse you with when I return." . . .

"I have the privilege of appearing on the floor of both Houses here [in Washington], and go to them every day. They are very handsome and commodious. There is a great deal of bad speaking, but there are a great many very remarkable men, in the legislature: such as John Quincy Adams, Clay, Preston, Calhoun, and others: with whom I need scarcely add I have been placed in the friendliest relations. Adams is a fine old fellow—seventy-six years old, but with most surprizing vigor, memory, readiness, and pluck. Clay is perfectly enchanting; an irresistible man. There are some very notable specimens, too, out of the West. Splendid men to look at, hard to receive, prompt to act, lions in energy, Crichtons in varied accomplishments, Indians in quickness of eye and gesture, Americans in affectionate and generous impulse. It would be difficult to exaggerate the nobility of some of these glorious fellows."

"Irving was with me at Washington yesterday, and *wept heartily* at parting. He is a fine fellow, when you know him well; and you would relish him, my dear friend, of all things. We have laughed together at some absurdities we have encountered in company, quite in my vociferous Devonshire Terrace style. The 'Merrikin' Government has treated him, he says, most liberally and handsomely in every respect. He thinks of sailing for Liverpool on the 7th of April, passing a short time in London, and then going to Paris. Perhaps you *may meet* him. If you do, he will know that you

---

## DICKENS'S FIRST VISIT

---

are my dearest friend, and will open his whole heart to you at once. His secretary of legation, Mr. Coggleswell,\* is a man of very remarkable information, a great traveler, a good talker, and a scholar. . . .

The next letter described his experiences in the Far West, his stay in St. Louis, his visit to a prairie, the return to Cincinnati, and, after a stage-coach ride from that city to Columbus, the travel thence to Sandusky, and so, by Lake Erie, to the Falls of Niagara. . . .

"A St. Louis lady complimented Kate upon her voice and manner of speaking, assuring her that she should never have suspected her of being Scotch, or even English. She was so obliging as to add that she would have taken her for an American, anywhere: which she (Kate) was no doubt aware was a very great compliment, as the Americans were admitted on all hands to have greatly refined upon the English language! I need not tell you that out of Boston and New York a nasal drawl is universal, but I may as well hint that the prevailing grammar is also more than doubtful; that the oddest vulgarisms are received idioms; that all the women who have been bred in slave-States speak more or less like negroes, from having been constantly in their childhood with black nurses; and that the most fashionable and aristocratic (these are two words in great use), instead of asking you in what place you were born, inquire where you 'hail from'! . . . ."

\* Dickens here refers to Dr. Joseph G. Cogswell, who was appointed to be Irving's secretary of legation at Madrid, but he declined, as John Jacob Astor desired a continuation of his services in starting the Astor Library. Dr. Cogswell became superintendent of the Astor Library in 1848.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

"I never in my life was in such a state of excitement as coming from Buffalo here [to Niagara Falls] this morning. You come by railroad, and are nigh two hours upon the way. I looked out for the spray, and listened for the roar, as far beyond the bounds of possibility as tho, landing in Liverpool, I were to listen for the music of your pleasant voice in Lincoln's Inn Fields. At last, when the train stopt, I saw two great white clouds rising up from the depths of the earth—nothing more. They rose up slowly, gently, majestically, into the air. I dragged Kate down a deep and slippery path leading to the ferry-boat; bullied Anne for not coming fast enough; perspired at every pore; and felt, it is impossible to say how, as the sound grew louder and louder in my ears, and yet nothing could be seen for the mist.

"There were two English officers with us (ah! what *gentlemen*, what noblemen of nature they seemed), and they hurried off with me; leaving Kate and Anne on a crag of ice; and clambered after me over the rocks at the foot of the small fall, while the ferryman was getting the boat ready. I was not disappointed—but I could make out nothing. In an instant I was blinded by the spray, and wet to the skin. I saw the water tearing madly down from some immense height, but could get no idea of shape, or situation, or anything but vague immensity. But when we were seated in the boat, and crossing at the very foot of the cataract—then I began to feel what it was. Directly I had changed my clothes at the inn<sup>1</sup> I went out again, taking Kate

<sup>1</sup> While at Niagara Dickens stopt at the old Clifton House on the Canadian side, overlooking the entire panorama of the Falls, burned many years afterward and then replaced by a modern structure.

---

## DICKENS'S FIRST VISIT

---

with me, and hurried to the Horseshoe Fall. I went down alone, into the very basin. It would be hard for a man to stand nearer God than he does there. There was a bright rainbow at my feet; and from that I looked up to—great Heaven! to *what* a fall of bright green water! The broad, deep, mighty stream seems to die in the act of falling; and from its unfathomable grave arises that tremendous ghost of spray and mist which is never laid, and has been haunting this place with the same dread solemnity—perhaps from the creation of the world.

"We purpose remaining here a week. In my next I will try to give you some idea of my impressions, and to tell you how they change with every day. At present it is impossible. I can only say that the first effect of this tremendous spectacle on me was peace of mind—tranquillity—great thoughts of eternal rest and happiness—nothing of terror. I can shudder at the recollection of Glencoe (dear friend, with Heaven's leave we must see Glencoe together), but whenever I think of Niagara I shall think of its beauty.

"If you could hear the roar that is in my ears as I write this. Both Falls are under our windows. From our sitting-room and bedroom we look down straight upon them. There is not a soul in the house but ourselves. What would I give if you and Mac were here to share the sensations of this time! I was going to add, what would I give if the dear girl whose ashes lie in Kensal Green had lived to come so far along with us—but she has been here many times, I doubt not, since her sweet face faded from my earthly sight."

## **“FIFTY-FOUR—FORTY OR FIGHT”**

**(1844)**

**BY JAMES G. BLAINE<sup>1</sup>**

The Oregon question, which now became associated, if not complicated, with the Texas question, originated many years before. By our treaty with Spain in 1819, the southern boundary of our possessions on the Pacific had been accurately defined. Our northern boundary was still unadjusted, and had been matter of dispute with Great Britain ever since we acquired the country. By the treaty of October 20, 1818, the 49th parallel of north latitude was established as the boundary between the United States and British America, from the Lake of the Woods to the Stony Mountains, as the Rocky Mountains were then termed. In the same treaty it was agreed that any country claimed by either the United States or Great Britain westward of the Stony Mountains should, with its harbors, bays, and rivers, be open for the term of ten years to the vessels, citizens, and subjects of either power. This agreement was entered into solely for the purpose of preventing disputes pending final settlement, and was not to be construed to the prejudice of either party. This was the beginning of the joint occupancy of the Oregon country, Eng-

<sup>1</sup> From Blaine's "Twenty Years of Congress." By permission of Mrs. Walter Damfossch and James G. Blaine, Jr., owners of the copyright. Copyright, 1884.

---

## **"FIFTY-FOUR—FORTY OR FIGHT"**

---

land having with prompt and characteristic enterprise forced her way across the continent after she had acquired Canada in 1763.\* Stimulated by certain alleged discoveries of her navigators on the northwest coast, Great Britain urged and maintained her title to a frontage on the Pacific, and made a bold claim to sovereignty, as far south as the mouth of the Columbia River, nearly, indeed, to the northern border of California. . . .

The two governments came to an agreement on these differences in 1842 by the negotiation of the convention known as the Ashburton Treaty. In transmitting the treaty to Congress, President Tyler made, for the first time since the agreement for a joint occupancy was renewed in 1827, a specific reference to the Oregon question. He informed Congress, that the territory of the United States commonly called the Oregon country was beginning to attract the attention of our fellow citizens, and that "the tide of our population, having reclaimed from the wilderness the more contiguous regions, was preparing to flow over those vast districts which stretch from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean"; that Great Britain "laid claim to a portion of the country and that the question could not be well included in the recent treaty without postponing other more pressing matters." He significantly added, that the difficulty might not for several years involve the peace of the two countries, yet he should urge upon Great Britain the importance of its early settlement.

As this paragraph was undoubtedly suggested

\* That is, by the treaty of peace which ended the war in America with France.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

and probably written by Mr. Webster,<sup>8</sup> it attracted wide attention on both sides of the Atlantic; and from that moment, in varying degrees of interest and urgency, the Oregon question became an active political issue. Before the next annual meeting of Congress, Mr. Upshur had succeeded Mr. Webster in the State Department; and the message of the President took still more advanced ground respecting Oregon. For political reasons, there was an obvious desire to keep the action of the Government on this issue well abreast of its aggressive movements in the matter of acquiring Texas. Emboldened by Mr. Webster's position of the preceding year, Mr. Upshur, with younger blood, and with more reason for a demonstrative course, was evidently disposed to force the discussion of the question with the British Government. Under his influence and advice, President Tyler declared, in his message of December, 1843, that "after the most rigid, and, as far as practicable, unbiased, examination of the subject, the United States have always contended that their rights appertain to the entire region of country lying on the Pacific, and embraced between latitude 42° and 54° 40'." Mr. Edward Everett, at that time our minister in London, was instructed to present these views to the British Government.

Before the President could send another annual message to Congress, Mr. Calhoun had been for several months at the head of the State Department, engaged in promoting, with singular skill and ability, his scheme for the annexation of Texas. With his quick perception, he discerned that if the policy apparently indicated by Mr. Webster and

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State.

---

## **"FIFTY-FOUR—FORTY OR FIGHT"**

---

aggressively proclaimed by Mr. Upshur, on the Oregon question, should be followed, and that issue sharply prest upon Great Britain, complications of a most embarrassing nature might arise, involving in their sweep the plans, already well matured, for acquiring Texas. In order to avert all danger of that kind, Mr. Calhoun opened a negotiation with the British minister in Washington, conducting it himself, for the settlement of the Oregon question; and at the very moment when the Democratic National Convention which nominated Mr. Polk was declaring our title to the whole of Oregon as far as  $54^{\circ} 40'$  to be "clear and unquestionable," the Democratic secretary of State was proposing to Her Majesty's representative to settle the entire controversy by the adoption of the 49th parallel as the boundary!

The negotiation was very nearly completed, and was suspended only by some dispute in regard to the right of navigating the Columbia River. It is not improbable that Mr. Calhoun, after disclosing to the British Government his willingness to accept the 49th parallel as our northern boundary, was anxious to have the negotiation temporarily postponed. If the treaty had been concluded at that time it would have seriously interfered with the success of Mr. Polk's candidacy by destroying the prestige of the "Fifty-four forties," as Colonel Benton termed them.

In Mr. Polk's election, Mr. Calhoun was deeply and indeed doubly interested; first, because of his earnest desire to defeat Mr. Clay, with whom he was at swords' points on all public issues; and again, because, having assumed the responsibility of defeating the nomination of Mr. Van Buren, he

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

was naturally desirous that his judgment should be vindicated by the election of the candidate whom his Southern friends had put forward. Urgently solicitous for the annexation of Texas, those friends were indifferent to the fate of the Oregon question, tho willing that it should me made a leading issue in the North, where it was presented with popular effect. The patriotic spirit of the country was appealed to, and to a considerable extent aroused and inflamed by the ardent and energetic declaration of our title to the whole of Oregon. "Fifty-four forty or fight" became a Democratic watchword; and the Whigs who attempted to argue against the extravagance or inexpediency of the claim continually lost ground, and were branded as cowards who were awed into silence by the fear of British power. All the prejudice against the British Government which had descended from the Revolution and from the War of 1812 was successfully evoked by the Democratic party, and they gained immeasurably by keeping an issue before the people which many of their leaders knew would be abandoned when the pressure of actual negotiations should be felt by our Government.

Mr. Polk, however, in his inaugural address, carefully reaffirmed the position respecting Oregon which his party had taken in the national canvass, and quoted part of the phrase used in the platform put forth by the convention which nominated him. The issue had been made so broadly that it must be squarely met, and finally adjusted. The Democrats in their eagerness had left no road for honorable retreat, and had cut themselves off from the resources and convenient postponements of diplomacy. Dangerous as it was to the new administra-

---

## "FIFTY-FOUR—FORTY OR FIGHT"

---

tion to confront the issue, it would have been still more dangerous to attempt to avoid it. The decisive step, in the policy to which the administration was committed, was to give formal notice to Great Britain that the joint occupation of the Oregon country under the treaty of 1827 must cease.

A certain degree of moral strength was unexpectedly imparted to the Democratic position by the fact that the venerable John Quincy Adams was decidedly in favor of the notice, and ably supported, in a unique and powerful speech in the House of Representatives, our title to the country up to  $54^{\circ} 40'$ . The first convention for joint occupancy had been negotiated while Mr. Adams was Secretary of State, and the second while he was President; so that, in addition to the weight of authority with which he always spoke, his words seemed entitled to special confidence on a question with which he was necessarily so familiar. His great influence brought many Whigs to the support of the resolution; and on the 9th of February, 1846, the House, by the large vote of 163 to 54, declared in favor of giving the treaty notice to Great Britain.

The country at once became alarmed by the growing rumors that the resolution of the House was a direct challenge to Great Britain for a trial of strength as to the superior title to the Oregon country, and it was soon apparent that the Senate would proceed with more circumspection and conservatism. Events were rapidly tending toward hostilities with Mexico, and the aggrandizement of territory likely to result from a war with that country was not viewed with a friendly eye, either

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

by Great Britain or France. Indeed, the annexation of Texas, which had been accomplished the preceding year, was known to be distasteful to those governments. They desired that Texas might remain an independent republic, under more liberal trade relations than could be secured from the United States with its steady policy of fostering and advancing its own manufacturing interests. The directors of the administration saw therefore more and more clearly that, if a war with Mexico were impending, it would be sheer madness to open a quarrel with Great Britain, and force her into an alliance against us. Mr. Adams and those who voted with him did not believe that the notice to the British Government would provoke a war, but that firmness on our part, in the negotiation which should ensue, would induce England to yield her pretensions to any part of Oregon; to which Mr. Adams maintained, with elaboration of argument and demonstration, she had no shadow of right.

Mr. Adams was opposed to war with Mexico, and therefore did not draw his conclusions from the premises laid down by those who were charged with the policy of the administration. They naturally argued that a war with Great Britain might end in our losing the whole of Oregon, without acquiring any territory on our southwestern border. The bare possibility of such a result would defeat the policy which they were seeking to uphold, and would at the same time destroy their party. In short, it became apparent that what might be termed the Texas policy of the administration, and what might be termed its Oregon policy, could not both be carried out. It required no prophet to foresee which would be maintained and which

---

## **"FIFTY-FOUR—FORTY OR FIGHT"**

---

would be abandoned. "Fifty-four forty or fight" had been a good cry for the political campaign; but, when the fight was to be with Great Britain, the issue became too serious to be settled by such international law as is dispensed on the stump. . . .

In simple truth, the country was not prepared to go to war with Great Britain in support of "our clear and unquestionable title" to the whole of Oregon. With her strong naval force on the Pacific, and her military force in Australasia, Great Britain could more readily and more easily take possession of the country in dispute than could the United States. We had no way of reaching Oregon except by doubling Cape Horn, and making a dangerous sea-voyage of many thousand miles. We could communicate across the continent only by the emigrant trail over rugged mountains and almost trackless plains. Our railway system was in its infancy in 1846. New York City did not have a continuous road to Buffalo. Philadelphia was not connected with Pittsburgh. Baltimore's projected line to the Ohio had only reached Cumberland among the eastern foot-hills of the Alleghanies. The entire Union had but five thousand miles of railway. There was scarcely a spot on the globe, outside of the United Kingdom, where we could not have fought England with greater advantage than on the northwest coast of America at that time. The war-cry of the Presidential campaign of 1844 was, therefore, in any event, absurd; and it proved to be mischievous.

It is not improbable, that, if the Oregon question had been allowed to rest for the time under the provisions of the treaty of 1827, the whole country would ultimately have fallen into our hands, and

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

the American flag might to-day be waving over British Columbia. The course of events and the lapse of time were working steadily to our advantage. In 1826 Great Britain declined to accept the 49th parallel, but demanded the Columbia River as the boundary. Twenty years afterward she accepted the line previously rejected. American settlers had forced her back. With the sweep of our emigration and civilization to the Pacific coast two years after the treaty of 1846, when gold was discovered in California, the tendency would have been still more strongly in our favor. Time, as Mr. Calhoun said, "would have effected everything for us" if we could only have been patient and peaceful.

Taking the question, however, as it stood in 1846, the settlement must, upon full consideration and review, be adjudged honorable to both countries. Wise statesmen of that day felt, as wise statesmen of subsequent years have more and more realized, that a war between Great Britain and the United States would not only be a terrible calamity to both nations, but that it would stay the progress of civilization throughout the world. Future generations would hold the governing power in both countries guilty of a crime if war should ever be permitted except upon the failure of every other arbitrament. The harmless laugh of one political party at the expense of the other forty years ago, the somewhat awkward receding from pretensions which could not be maintained by the executive of the nation, have passed into oblivion. But a striking and useful lesson would be lost if it should be forgotten that the country was brought to the verge of war by the proclamation of a policy

---

## **"FIFTY-FOUR—FORTY OR FIGHT"**

---

which could not be, and was not intended to be, enforced. It was originated as a cry to catch votes; and except with the ignorant, and the few whose judgment was carried away by enthusiasm, it was from the first thoroughly insincere. If the punishment could have fallen only upon those who raised the cry, perfect justice would have been done. But the entire country suffered, and probably endured a serious and permanent loss, from the false step taken by men who claimed what they could not defend and did not mean to defend.

The Secretary of State, Mr. Buchanan, gained much credit for his conduct of the Oregon question, both diplomatically and politically. His correspondence with Mr. Packenham, the British minister at Washington, was conspicuously able. It strengthened Mr. Buchanan at home and gave him an enviable reputation in Europe. His political management of the question was especially adroit. His party was in sore trouble over the issue, and naturally looked to him for relief and escape. To extricate the administration from the embarrassment caused by its ill-timed and boastful pretensions to the line of  $54^{\circ} 40'$  was a difficult and delicate task.

## MORSE'S FIRST TELEGRAPH LINE

(1844)

### I

BY ALONZO B. CORNELL<sup>1</sup>

In 1828 Joseph Henry, then professor of physics at the Albany Academy, afterward a professor at Princeton, and subsequently for many years secretary of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, made the highly important discovery that by winding a plain iron core with many layers of insulated wire, through which the electric current was passed, he could at pleasure charge and discharge the iron core with magnetic power. Thus Henry produced the electromagnet which was the beginning of the mastery by man of the subtle fluid. He also discovered that the intensity and power of the electric current were materially augmented by increasing the number of the series of battery plates without increasing the quantity of metal used in their construction. These discoveries of Henry were, beyond all question, the most important in real and intrinsic value ever made in the progress of electric science, as they

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cornell became Governor of New York in 1882. His father, Ezra Cornell, was the founder of Cornell University. Ezra Cornell was associated with Morse as the contractor who constructed for Morse his first telegraph lines. He thus laid the chief foundation of the fortune out of which to contribute the fund with which the university was founded.

---

## MORSE'S FIRST TELEGRAPH LINE

---

form the solid basis upon which all subsequent inventors have been enabled to accomplish successful results in their various fields of endeavor. . . .

The possibility of utilizing Professor Henry's electromagnet for the purpose of transmitting intelligence to a distant point was conceived by still another American, Professor Samuel Finley Breese Morse, of New York,<sup>4</sup> during his passage on board the packet-ship *Sully*, from Havre to New York, in the winter of 1832. Incidental discussions between himself and Doctor Jackson, a fellow-passenger, in reference to recent electrical improvements on both sides of the Atlantic, led Morse to the conclusion that intelligence might be instantaneously transmitted over a metallic circuit to a distant point, and he thereupon determined to devote himself to the solution of the problem involved. The following day he exhibited a rough sketch of a plan for recording electric impulses necessary to convey and express intelligence. He pursued the subject with great devotion during the remainder of the voyage, and after arrival in New York began the construction of the necessary apparatus to accomplish his purpose.

Morse was by profession a portrait painter of more than ordinary merit, and was obliged to continue his artistic labors for a livelihood. He was a graduate of Yale College, where his attention had first been attracted to electrical experiments. He was thus, in a measure, prepared for carrying forward the important work he had undertaken, and pursued his labors with great assiduity. Devoting every spare moment to the pursuit of his object, which was attained but slowly by reason of his lack

<sup>4</sup> Morse was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in 1791.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

of mechanical skill and ingenuity, not until 1837 had he so far succeeded in his efforts as to be prepared to make application for letters-patent to enable him to secure and protect his rights of invention in the electromagnetic telegraph. In explanation of the slow progress of his experimental work, Professor Morse, in writing to a friend, said:

"Up to the autumn of 1837 my telegraphic apparatus existed in so rude a form that I felt reluctance to have it seen. My means were very limited, so limited as to preclude the possibility of constructing an apparatus of such mechanical finish as to warrant my success in venturing upon its public exhibition. I had no wish to expose to ridicule the representative of so many hours of laborious thought. Prior to the summer of 1837 I depended upon my pencil for subsistence. Indeed, so straitened were my circumstances that in order to save time to carry out my invention and to economize my scanty means I had for months lodged and eaten in my studio, procuring food in small quantities from some grocery, and preparing it myself. To conceal from my friends the stinted manner in which I lived, I was in the habit of bringing food to my room in the evenings; and this was my mode of life for many years."

After the continuance of this heroic struggle for more than five years, Morse found himself compelled to seek the aid of more accomplished mechanical skill than he possest, to perfect his apparatus, and was obliged to surrender a quarter interest in his invention in order to obtain pecuniary aid for this purpose.

Having thus succeeded in obtaining, at such serious sacrifice, the requisite financial assistance

---

## MORSE'S FIRST TELEGRAPH LINE

---

to enable him to perfect the mechanism necessary to demonstrate his invention, Professor Morse lost no time in completing his apparatus and presenting it for public inspection. On January 6, 1838, he first operated his system successfully, over a wire three miles long, in the presence of a number of personal friends, at Morristown, New Jersey. In the following month he made a similar exhibition before the faculty of the New York University, which was an occasion of much interest among the scientists of the metropolis. Shortly thereafter the apparatus was taken to Philadelphia and exhibited at the Franklin Institute, where he received the highest commendation from the committee of science and arts, with a strong expression in favor of government aid for the purpose of demonstrating the practical usefulness of the system.

From Philadelphia Morse removed his apparatus to Washington, where he was permitted to demonstrate its operation before President Van Buren and his Cabinet. Foreign ministers and members of both Houses of Congress, as well, also, as prominent citizens, were invited to attend the exhibition, and manifested much interest in the novelty of the invention. A bill was introduced in Congress making an appropriation of thirty thousand dollars for the purpose of providing for the erection of an experimental line of telegraph between Washington and Baltimore, to illustrate, by practical use, its general utility. The bill was in good time favorably reported from the committee on commerce, but made no further progress in that Congress. Similar bills were subsequently introduced and diligently supported in each succeeding Congress, but it was not until the very closing hour of the expiring

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

session of 1843 that the necessary enactment was effected and the appropriation secured.

The plan of construction devised by Professor Morse for the experimental line of telegraph to be erected between Washington and Baltimore, under the Congressional appropriation, provided for placing insulated wires in a lead pipe underground. This was to be accomplished by the use of a specially devised plough of peculiar construction, to be drawn by a powerful team, by which means the pipe containing the electric conductors was to be automatically deposited in the earth. This apparatus was entirely successful in operation, and the pipe was thus buried to the complete satisfaction of all concerned, at a cost very much lower than the work could have been accomplished in any other manner. Two wires were to be used to form a complete metallic circuit, for at that time it was not known, as was shortly afterward discovered, that the earth could be used to form one-half of the circuit. For purposes of insulation the wires were neatly covered with cotton-yarn and then saturated in a bath of hot gum shellac, but this treatment proved defective in insulating properties, for when ten miles of line had been completed the wires were found to be wholly useless for electric conduction.

No mode had been devised for the treatment of india-rubber to make it available for purposes of insulation, and gutta-percha was wholly unknown as an article of use or commerce in this country. Twenty-three thousand dollars of the Government appropriation had been expended, and the work thus far accomplished was an acknowledged failure. Only seven thousand dollars of the available

---

## MORSE'S FIRST TELEGRAPH LINE

---

fund remained unexpended, and this was regarded as inadequate to complete the undertaking under any other plan. The friends of the enterprise were in despair, and for some time saw no other alternative than to apply to Congress for an additional appropriation. This, however, was regarded as almost hopeless, and the difficulty of the situation was extremely embarrassing.

An amusing incident was related of the means used to keep from public knowledge the desperate situation. Professor Morse finally visited the scene of activity where the pipe-laying was proceeding, and, calling the superintendent aside, confided to him the fact that the work must be stopt without the newspapers finding out the true reason of its suspension. The quick-witted superintendent was equal to the occasion, and, starting the ponderous machine, soon managed to run foul of a protruding rock and break the plow. The newspapers published sensational accounts of the accident, and announced that it would require several weeks to repair damages. Thus the real trouble was kept from the public until new plans could be determined upon.

After long and careful consideration, Professor Morse very reluctantly decided to erect the wires on poles. This plan was, at first, considered wholly objectionable, under the apprehension that the structure would be disturbed by evil-minded persons. It had, however, become manifest that this was the only mode of construction that could be accomplished within the remainder of the appropriation, and, finally, upon ascertaining that pole

\* This work was being done by Ezra Cornell.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

lines had already been adopted in England, it was determined to proceed in this manner. The line was thus completed between Washington and Baltimore about May 1, 1844, and proved to be successful and in every way satisfactory in its operation.

Shortly after the completion of the line the National Democratic Convention, which nominated Polk and Dallas for President and Vice-President, assembled in Baltimore [May, 1844]. Reports of the convention proceedings were promptly telegraphed to the capital city, where the telegraph office was thronged with members of Congress interested in the news. These reports created an immense sensation in Washington and speedily removed all doubts as to the practical success of the new system of communication. A dispatch from the Honorable Silas Wright, then United States Senator from New York, refusing to accept the nomination for Vice-President, was read in the National Convention and produced an extraordinary interest from the fact that very few of the delegates had ever heard of the telegraph, and it required much explanation to satisfy them of the genuineness of the alleged communication. . . .

Once generally established, the telegraph won its way to popular appreciation very rapidly. It was in harmony with the spirit of the age, and it was not long before every town of any considerable importance regarded telegraphic facilities as an indispensable necessity. The small cost soon induced the construction of rival lines, regardless of the rights of the patentees, and within a very few years unwise competition began to bring many lines to a condition of bankruptcy. The weaker

---

## MORSE'S FIRST TELEGRAPH LINE

---

concerns soon passed through the sheriff's hands and found purchasers only at an extreme sacrifice, at the bidding of the more provident and conservative proprietors of competing lines. Instead of inducing a more prudent course, these disastrous results only served to feed the spirit of rivalry, and general insolvency seemed to threaten the permanent prosperity of the telegraph business, in consequence of the wild and reckless competition which appeared to be inherent in its nature.

This extremely unsatisfactory condition of telegraph rivalry drifted on from bad to worse until 1854, when, from dire necessity of self-preservation, a few of the more prudent and far-sighted proprietors of telegraph property were induced to combine their interests with some of their competitors and thus avoid the ruinous policy which had been so rapidly exhausting their vitality. Accordingly the principal telegraph lines in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and some of the neighboring States were brought into fraternal relations and formed the nucleus of the Western Union Telegraph Company.

The new policy soon brought prosperity in place of waste and improvidence. Profits were devoted to the purchase of additional lines, thus enlarging their domain and strengthening their position. Prosperity increased with rapid strides; and the beneficial effects of extirpating wasteful rivalry and building up a substantial system with superior facilities and provident management gave the new organization a dominating influence among the telegraph companies of America.

---

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

---

### II

#### MORSE'S OWN ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL LINE<sup>1</sup>

I had spent at Washington two entire sessions of Congress, one in 1837-38, the other in 1842-43, in the endeavor so far to interest the Government in the novel telegraph as to furnish me with the means to construct a line of sufficient length to test its practicability and utility.

The last days of the last session of that Congress were about to close. A bill appropriating thirty thousand dollars for my purpose had passed the House, and was before the Senate for concurrence, waiting its turn on the calendar. On the last day of the session (3d of March, 1843), I had spent the whole day and part of the evening in the Senate chamber, anxiously watching the progress of the passing of the various bills, of which there were, in the morning of that day, over one hundred and forty to be acted upon, before the one in which I was interested would be reached; and a resolution

<sup>1</sup> This account is contained in a letter which Morse wrote from Paris in 1866. Morse was an artist as well as an inventor. Having graduated from Yale in 1810, he studied art in London under Benjamin West, and opened a studio in New York in 1823, becoming the first president of the National Academy of Design (1826-42). Morse first designed the electric telegraph in 1832, and three years later exhibited a working model of it. In 1837 he applied for a patent, and in 1843 Congress granted an appropriation for the construction of a line as here described between Baltimore and Washington, the same being completed in 1844.

---

## MORSE'S FIRST TELEGRAPH LINE

---

had a few days before been passed, to proceed with the bills on the calendar in their regular order, forbidding any bill to be taken up out of its regular place.

As evening approached, there seemed to be but little chance that the Telegraph Bill would be reached before the adjournment, and consequently I had the prospect of the delay of another year, with the loss of time, and all my means already expended. In my anxiety, I consulted with two of my senatorial friends—Senator Huntington, of Connecticut, and Senator Wright, of New York—asking their opinion of the probability of reaching the bill before the close of the session. Their answers were discouraging, and their advice was to prepare myself for disappointment. In this state of mind I retired to my chamber, and made all my arrangements for leaving Washington the next day. Painful as was this prospect of renewed disappointment, you, my dear sir, will understand me when I say that, knowing from experience whence my help must come in any difficulty I soon disposed of my cares, and slept as quietly as a child.

In the morning, as I had just gone into the breakfast-room, the servant called me out, announcing that a young lady was in the parlor, wishing to speak with me. I was at once greeted with the smiling face of my young friend, the daughter of my old and valued friend and classmate, the Hon. H. L. Ellsworth, the Commissioner of Patents. On expressing my surprize at so early a call, she said, "I have come to congratulate you." "Indeed, for what?" "On the passage of your bill." "Oh, no, my young friend, you are mistaken; I was in the

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

Senate chamber till after the lamps were lighted, and my senatorial friends assured me there was no chance for me." "But," she replied, "it is you that are mistaken. Father was there at the adjournment, at midnight, and saw the President put his name to your bill; and I asked father if I might come and tell you, and he gave me leave. Am I the first to tell you?" The news was so unexpected that for some moments I could not speak. At length I replied: "Yes, Annie, you are the first to inform me; and now I am going to make you a promise: the first dispatch on the completed line from Washington to Baltimore shall be yours." "Well," said she, "I shall hold you to your promise."

In about a year from that time the line from Washington to Baltimore was completed. I was in Baltimore when the wires were brought into the office and attached to the instrument. I proceeded to Washington, leaving word that no dispatch should be sent through the line until I had sent one from Washington. On my arrival there, I sent a note to Miss Ellsworth, announcing to her that everything was ready, and I was prepared to fulfil my promise of sending the first dispatch over the wires, which she was to indite. The answer was immediately returned. The dispatch was, "*What hath God wrought!*" It was sent to Baltimore, and repeated to Washington, and the strip of paper upon which the telegraphic characters are printed was claimed by Governor Seymour, of Hartford, Connecticut, then a member of the House, on the ground that Miss Ellsworth was a native of Hartford. It was delivered to him by Miss Ellsworth, and is now preserved in

---

## **MORSE'S FIRST TELEGRAPH LINE**

---

the archives of the Hartford Museum, or Atheneum.

I need only add that no words could have been selected more expressive of the disposition of my own mind at that time, to ascribe all the honor to Him to whom it truly belongs.

## HOWE'S INVENTION OF THE SEWING-MACHINE

(1845)

The father of Elias Howe, Jr., the inventor and patentee of the American sewing-machine (born in Spencer, Mass., in 1819; died in Brooklyn, L. I., October 3, 1867), was a farmer and miller, and, as was the custom at that time in the country towns of New England, carried on in his family some of those minor branches of industry suited to the capacity of children, with which New England abounds. In his case the household industry in which most of his eight children were employed was the setting of card-teeth for carding cotton. When old enough, Elias assisted his father on the mill and farm, and it was when employed in the former, it is said, that he acquired that direction of taste and talent which developed itself so fruitfully both for himself and for his country. In 1835 he went to Lowell, and was employed there as a learner in a manufactory of cotton machinery, where he remained until the financial panic of 1837, when, like others, the stopping of the mills left him unemployed. He next found work at Cambridge, but remained there but a few months, having in the meantime succeeded in obtaining employment in the shop of Ari Davis, a Boston machinist.

Here the feasibility of constructing a sewing-

<sup>1</sup> From an article in "Appleton's Annual Cyclopedie" for 1867. By permission of D. Appleton & Co.

---

## HOWE'S. SEWING-MACHINE

---

machine was talked of in his presence, and to this circumstance, no doubt, he is indebted to priority as the inventor. He nursed his idea, it appears, for several years, unable to develop it with steel and iron. Three years after his first introduction to the workshop of Davis, we find him, when in the receipt of but \$9 a week, and with but a delicate constitution, adding to his cares by getting married. His health was not bettered by his new life, and its burdens bore heavily upon him. It was at this time that he gave heart and soul to perfect the invention which has since made him famous and a millionaire. But despite the labors of many weary months and the wakeful nights when he needed rest so much after his ordinary day's work, it was not until late in 1844 that he at last arose from his work, satisfied that he had embodied his idea. But when ready to put his invention before the world, he was without the means even to purchase the material necessary to the construction of a perfect model.

It was at this time that he met an old school-fellow, George Fisher, a wood and coal merchant, at Cambridge, who, believing that there was a fortune in the discovery, formed a partnership with Howe, taking him and his family to board with him, that Elias might use the garret they had occupied, as a workshop, and advancing the sum of \$500 wherewith to provide the necessary tools and material for the work. Here Howe labored day and night, completing his first machine in May, 1845. It might be thought that at this point, if the laborer did not rest, at least his fitting reward began, but it was not so. Strange as it may seem, he met opposition on every side from those most

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

interested in the labor-saving machine. He exhibited it in Boston, where he convinced the tailors of its usefulness, and won their commendation, qualified by the expression of their opinion which accompanied it, that it would ruin the trade. Their praise of the machine was all the support its inventor received. Not one of them would invest a dollar in it.

Again in despair, with all his money gone, his friend Fisher came once more to his rescue, and between them the machine was patented. This was the extent of his friend's support; the failure of further efforts to introduce the invention to public notice and patronage broke down the confidence of Fisher, and Howe moved back to his father's house in Cambridge, where he had resided prior to his acquaintance with Fisher, his father having removed there, to carry on the manufacture of palm-leaf strips for hat-making. For a brief time he obtained employment on a railroad as engineer, and drove a locomotive until he broke down completely in health. Still hopeful, however, he concluded to seek the patronage in England denied him at home, and, assisted by his father, his brother Amasa left with the machine in October, 1846. Amasa found there, in William Thomas, of Cheapside, London, the first financial success, and Mr. Thomas made an excellent bargain, receiving for £250 sterling the machine which the brother had brought with him, and the right to use as many as he needed in his own business of corset, umbrella, and valise making. He offered £3 per week if Elias would come to him and adapt the machine to corset making. With this offer Amasa returned, and as the £250 only afforded a tem-

---

## HOWE'S SEWING-MACHINE

---

porary relief, Elias concluded to go to England and accept the offer of Mr. Thomas, which he did, accompanied by Amasa. Here he worked eight months, but Thomas was exacting and Elias left him at the expiration of that time. In the meantime, his sick wife and three children had joined him.

The story of his life, for several months after his dismissal from the workshop of Thomas, is most painful in its details, ending in absolute penury and his return home, after an absence of two years, with a half-crown in his pocket, and his model and patent papers pawned to furnish the means for his return. He landed at New York, where he learned that his wife, who had preceded him, was dying of consumption at Cambridge. He had not money enough to enable him to reach her. In a few days, however, he succeeded, reaching her bedside just before her death. Fate had not yet done her worst. The ship in which he had embarked the few household goods he had gathered together in England was lost at sea. This it would appear was fortune's last blow. He soon found himself in good employment, and better still, in a short time he realized that his machine had become famous during his absence. Ingenious mechanics, regardless of his patents, had constructed facsimiles. They were being exhibited about the country as wonders, and in some places had been actually introduced in important manufactures.

Howe now found friends, and, after some delay, the necessary funds to establish his rights. In 1850 he was superintending in New York City the construction of machines to order. With the litigation which accompanies the first steps of the in-

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

ventor on the road to fortune, readers are familiar. It is known that so protracted were these law proceedings that it was not until 1854, four years after his return from England, that Mr. Howe established his prior claim to the invention. Then, sole proprietor of his patent, his years of increasing revenue began, which grew from \$300, it is stated, to \$200,000. On the 10th of September, 1867, his patent expired, at which time it was calculated he had realized about \$2,000,000. With this princely fortune he enjoyed fame enough to satisfy him, had he worked for that alone, the last acknowledgment of his genius being the gold medal of the Paris Exposition, and the Cross of the Legion of Honor in addition, as a compliment to him as a manufacturer and inventor. For several years past, he had been a practical manufacturer of sewing-machines, and the machine bearing his name has now an excellent reputation, especially for leather work. During the Civil War Mr. Howe manifested a high degree of patriotism. When the country was in need of soldiers he contributed money largely, and at a public meeting in Bridgeport he enlisted as a private soldier in the Seventeenth Regiment, Connecticut Volunteers. He went to the field and performed his duties as an enlisted man, till his health failed. More than this, when the Government was prest for funds to pay its soldiers, he advanced the money necessary to pay the regiment of which he was a member.

# THE ACQUISITION OF CALIFORNIA

(1846)

## FREMONT'S SUCCESSFUL INVASION

BY THOMAS H. BENTON<sup>1</sup>

In the month of May, 1845, Mr. Fremont, then a brevet captain of engineers (appointed a lieutenant-colonel of rifles before he returned), set out on his third expedition of geographical and scientific exploration in the Great West. Hostilities had not broken out between the United States and Mexico; but Texas had been incorporated;<sup>2</sup> the preservation of peace was precarious, and Mr. Fremont was determined, by no act of his, to increase the difficulties, or to give any just cause

<sup>1</sup> From Benton's "Thirty Years' View."

Before Fremont's invasion, California had been under Spanish and Mexican rule. It was not settled by the Spaniards until 1769; hence the interesting and picturesque old missions of California are not so old as they have sometimes been popularly supposed to be. The first settlement—that at San Diego—was founded by eighty Spanish friars and soldiers. By the end of the century eighteen missions had been established, and counted several thousand native converts to Christianity. The crops produced varied from 30,000 to 75,000 bushels per year. The missions possess about 70,000 horses and cattle. The Spanish population was never large. Bancroft estimated that in 1800 there had lived there within thirty years about 1,700 white persons. By 1810 the white population was about 2,130, by 1840, 5,700. At the time of the conquest, the total was popularly estimated at between 8,000 and 12,000.

<sup>2</sup> That is, Texas had been annexed to the United States.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

of complaint to the Mexican Government. His line of observation would lead him to the Pacific Ocean, through a Mexican province—through the desert parts first, and the settled part afterward of the Alta California.

Approaching the settled parts of the province at the commencement of winter, he left his equipment of 60 men and 200 horses on the frontier, and proceeded alone to Monterey, to make known to the Governor the object of his coming, and his desire to pass the winter (for the refreshment of his men and horses) in the uninhabited parts of the valley of the San Joaquin. The permission was granted; but soon revoked, under the pretext that Mr. Fremont had come into California, not to pursue science, but to excite the American settlers to revolt against the Mexican Government. Upon this pretext troops were raised, and marched to attack him. Having notice of their approach, he took a position on the mountain, hoisted the flag of the United States, and determined, with his sixty brave men, to defend himself to the last extremity—never surrendering; and dying, if need be, to the last man. A messenger came into his camp, bringing a letter from the American consul at Monterey, to apprise him of his danger: that messenger, returning, reported that 2,000 men could not force the American position; and that information had its effect. . . .

It was in the midst of dangers in the wildest regions of the Farthest West that Mr. Fremont was pursuing science and shunning war, when the arrival of Lieutenant Gillespie, and his communications from Washington, suddenly changed all his plans, turned him back from Ore-

---

## THE ACQUISITION OF CALIFORNIA

---

gon, and opened a new and splendid field of operations in California itself. He arrived in the valley of the Sacramento in the month of May, 1846, and found the country alarmingly and critically situated. Three great operations, fatal to American interests, were then going on, and without remedy, if not arrested at once. These were: 1. The massacre of the Americans, and the destruction of their settlements, in the valley of the Sacramento. 2. The subjection of California to British protection. 3. The transfer of the public domain to British subjects. And all this with a view to anticipate the events of a Mexican war, and to shelter California from the arms of the United States.

The American settlers sent a deputation to the camp of Mr. Fremont, in the valley of the Sacramento, laid all these dangers before him, and implored him to place himself at their head and save them from destruction. General Castro was then in march upon them: the Indians were incited to attack their families, and burn their wheat fields, and were only waiting for the dry season to apply the torch. Juntas were in session to transfer the country to Great Britain: the public domain was passing away in large grants to British subjects: a British fleet was expected on the coast: the British vice-consul, Forbes, and the emissary priest, Macnamara, ruling and conducting everything: and all their plans so far advanced as to render the least delay fatal.

It was then the beginning of June. War had broken out between the United States and Mexico, but that was unknown in California. Mr. Fremont had left the two countries at peace when he

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

set out upon his expedition, and was determined to do nothing to disturb their relations: he had even left California to avoid giving offense; and to return and take up arms in so short a time was apparently to discredit his own previous conduct as well as to implicate his Government. He felt all the responsibilities of his position; but the actual approach of Castro, and the immediate danger of the settlers, left him no alternative. He determined to put himself at the head of the people, and to save the country. To repulse Castro was not sufficient: to overturn the Mexican Government in California, and to establish Californian independence, was the bold resolve, and the only measure adequate to the emergency.

That resolve was taken, and executed with a celerity that gave it a romantic success. The American settlers rushed to his camp—brought their arms, horses and ammunition—were formed into a battalion; and obeyed with zeal and alacrity the orders they received. In thirty days all the northern part of California was freed from Mexican authority—independence proclaimed—the flag of independence raised—Castro flying to the south—the American settlers saved from destruction; and the British party in California counteracted and broken up in all their schemes.

This movement for independence was the salvation of California, and snatched it out of the hands of the British at the moment they were ready to clutch it. For two hundred years—from the time of the navigator Drake, who almost claimed it as a discovery, and placed the English name of New Albion\* upon it—the eye of England

\* See the account of Drake's discovery in Vol. I, page 156.

---

## THE ACQUISITION OF CALIFORNIA

---

has been upon California; and the magnificent bay of San Francisco, the great seaport of the north Pacific Ocean, has been surveyed as her own. The approaching war between Mexico and the United States was the crisis in which she expected to realize the long-deferred wish for its acquisition; and carefully she took her measures accordingly. She sent two squadrons to the Pacific as soon as Texas was incorporated—well seeing the actual war which was to grow out of that event—a small one into the mouth of the Columbia, an imposing one to Mazatlan, on the Mexican coast, to watch the United States squadron there, and to anticipate its movement upon California. Commodore Sloat, commanding the squadron at Mazatlan, saw that he was watched, and pursued, by Admiral Seymour, who lay alongside of him, and he determined to deceive him. He stood out to sea, and was followed by the British admiral. During the day he bore west, across the ocean, as if going to the Sandwich Islands: Admiral Seymour followed. In the night the American commodore tacked, and ran up the coast toward California: the British admiral, not seeing the tack, continued on his course, and went entirely to the Sandwich Islands before he was undeceived. Commodore Sloat arrived before Monterey on the second of July, entering the port amicably, and offering to salute the town, which the authorities declined on the pretext that they had no powder to return it—in reality because they momentarily expected the British fleet.

Commodore Sloat remained five days before the town, and until he heard of Fremont's operations: then believing that Fremont had orders from his

---

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

Government to take California, he having none himself, he determined to act himself. He received the news of Fremont's successes on the 6th day of July; on the 7th he took the town of Monterey, and sent a dispatch to Fremont. This latter came to him in all speed, at the head of his mounted force. Going immediately on board the commodore's vessel, an explanation took place. The commodore learned with astonishment that Fremont had no orders from his Government to commence hostilities—that he had acted entirely on his own responsibility. This left the commodore without authority for having taken Monterey; for still at this time, the commencement of the war with Mexico was unknown. Uneasiness came upon the commodore. He remembered the fate of Captain Jones in making the mistake of seizing the town once before in time of peace. He resolved to return to the United States, which he did—turning over the command of the squadron to Commodore Stockton, who had arrived on the 15th. The next day (16th) Admiral Seymour arrived; his flagship the Collingwood, of 80 guns, and his squadron the largest British fleet ever seen in the Pacific. To his astonishment he beheld the American flag flying over Monterey, the American squadron in its harbor, and Fremont's mounted riflemen encamped over the town.

His mission was at an end. The prize had escaped him. He attempted nothing further, and Fremont and Stockton rapidly prest the conquest of California to its conclusion. The subsequent military events can be traced by any history: they were the natural sequence of the great measure conceived and executed by Fremont be-

---

## THE ACQUISITION OF CALIFORNIA

---

fore any squadron had arrived upon the coast, before he knew of any war with Mexico, and without any authority from his Government, except the equivocal and enigmatical visit of Mr Gillespie. Before the junction of Mr. Fremont with Commodore Sloat and Stockton his operations had been carried on under the flag of independence—the Bear Flag, as it was called—the device of the bear being adopted on account of the courageous qualities of that animal (the white bear), which never gives the road to men—which attacks any number—and fights to the last with increasing ferocity, with amazing strength of muscle, and with an incredible tenacity of the vital principle—never more formidable and dangerous than when mortally wounded. The independents took the device of this bear for their flag, and established the independence of California under it: and in joining the United States forces, hauled down this flag, and hoisted the flag of the United States.

And the fate of California would have been the same whether the United States squadrons had arrived, or not; and whether the Mexican War had happened, or not. California was in a revolutionary state, already divided from Mexico politically as it had always been geographically. The last governor-general from Mexico, Don Michel Toreno, had been resisted—fought—captured—and shipt back to Mexico, with his 300 cutthroat soldiers. An insurgent government was in operation, determined to be free of Mexico, sensible of inability to stand alone, and looking, part to the United States, part to Great Britain, for the support which they needed. All the American settlers were for the United States protec-

---

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

tion, and joined Fremont. The leading Californians were also joining him. His conciliatory course drew them rapidly to him. The Picos, who were the leading men of the revolt (Don Pico, Don Andres, and Don Jesus), became his friends. California became independent of Mexico by the revolt of the Picos, and independent of them by the revolt of the American settlers, had its destiny to fulfil—which was, to be handed over to the United States. So that its incorporation with the American republic was equally sure in any and every event.

# THE MORMON MIGRATION TO UTAH

(1846—1848)

BY WILLIAM A. LINN<sup>1</sup>

Two things may be accepted as facts with regard to the migration of the Mormons westward from Illinois: First, that they would not have moved had they not been compelled to; and second, that they did not know definitely where they were going when they started. Altho Joseph Smith showed an uncertainty of his position by his instruction that the Twelve should look for a place in California or Oregon to which his people might move, he considered this removal so remote a possibility that he was at the same time beginning his campaign for the Presidency of the United States. As late as the spring of 1845, removal was considered by the leaders as only an alternative. . . .

Their destination could not have been determined in advance, because so little was known of the Far West. The territory now embraced in the

<sup>1</sup> From Linn's "Story of the Mormons." By arrangement with the publishers, The Macmillan Co. Copyright 1900. Joseph Smith founded the Mormon Church in 1830. Its adherents first settled at Kirtland, Ohio, but were soon expelled. They removed then to Missouri, where again they were expelled, and then made a third settlement at Nauvoo, in Illinois, whence they removed in 1847 to Utah. Mr. Linn for many years was managing editor of the *New York Evening Post*.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

boundaries of California and Utah was then under Mexican government, and "California" was, in common use, a name covering the Pacific coast and a stretch of land extending indefinitely eastward. Oregon had been heard of a good deal, and it, as well as Vancouver Island, had been spoken of as a possible goal if a westward migration became necessary. Lorenzo Snow, in describing the westward start, said: "On the first of March, the ground covered with snow, we broke encampment about noon, and soon nearly four hundred wagons were moving to—*we knew not where.*" . . .

The story of this march is a remarkable one in many ways. Begun in winter, with the ground soon covered with snow, the travelers encountered Arctic weather, with the inconveniences of ice, rain, and mud, until May. After a snowfall they would have to scrape the ground when they had selected a place for pitching the tents. After a rain, or one of the occasional thaws, the country (there were no regular roads) would be practically impassable for teams, and they would have to remain in camp until the water disappeared, and the soil would bear the weight of the wagons after it was corduroyed with branches of trees. At one time bad roads caused a halt of two or three weeks. Fuel was not always abundant, and after a cold night it was no unusual thing to find wet garments and bedding frozen stiff in the morning.

Game was plenty—deer, wild turkeys, and prairie-hens—but while the members of this party were better supplied with provisions than their followers, there was no surplus among them, and by April many families were really destitute of food. Eliza Snow mentions that her brother,

---

## MORMON MIGRATION TO UTAH

---

Lorenzo—one of the captains of tents—had two wagons, a small tent, a cow, and a scanty supply of provisions and clothing, and that “he was much better off than some of our neighbors.” . . .

The adaptability of the American pioneer to his circumstances was shown during this march in many ways. When a halt occurred, a shoemaker might be seen looking for a stone to serve as a lap-stone in his repair work, of a gunsmith mending a rifle, or a weaver at a wheel or loom. The women learned that the jolting wagons would churn their milk, and, when a halt occurred, it took them but a short time to heat an oven hollowed out of a hillside in which to bake the bread already “raised.” Colonel Kane says that he saw a piece of cloth the wool for which was sheared, dyed, spun, and woven during this march. . . .

John Taylor, whose pictures of this march, painted with a view to attract English emigrants, were always highly colored, estimated that, when he left Council Bluffs for England, in July, 1846, there were in camp and on the way 15,000 Mormons, with 3,000 wagons, 30,000 head of cattle, a great many horses and mules, and a vast number of sheep. Colonel Kane says that, besides the wagons, there was “a large number of nondescript turnouts, the motley makeshifts of poverty; from the unsuitable heavy cart that lumbered on mysteriously, with its sick driver hidden under its counterpane cover, to the crazy two-wheeled trundle, such as our own poor employ in the conveyance of their slop-barrels, this pulled along, it may be, by a little dry-dugged heifer, and rigged up only to drag some such light weight as a baby, a sack of meal or a pack of clothes and bedding.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

Young and most of the first party continued their westward march through an uninhabited country, where they had to make their own roads. But they met with no opposition from the Indians, and the head of the procession reached the banks of the Missouri near Council Bluffs in June, other companies following in quite rapid succession.

On October 9 wagons sent back by the earlier emigrants for their unfortunate brethren had arrived, and the start for the Missouri began. Bullock relates that, just as they were ready to set out, a great flight of quails settled in the camp, running around the wagons, so near that they could be knocked over with sticks, and the children caught them alive. One bird alighted upon their tea-board, in the midst of the cups, while they were at breakfast. It was estimated that five hundred of the birds were flying about the camp that day, but when one hundred had been killed or caught, the captain forbade the killing of any more, "as it was a direct manifestation and visitation by the Lord." Young closes his account of this incident with the words, "Tell this to the nations of the earth! Tell it to the kings and nobles and great ones." Wells, in his manuscript, "Utah Notes" (quoted by H. H. Bancroft), says: "This phenomenon extended some thirty or forty miles along the river, and was generally observed. The quail in immense quantities had attempted to cross the river, but this being beyond their strength, had dropt into the river boats or on the banks. . . .

The principal camp on the Missouri, known as Winter Quarters, was on the west bank, on what is now the site of Florence, Nebraska. A

---

## MORMON MIGRATION TO UTAH

---

council was held with the Omaha chiefs in the latter part of August, and Big Elk, in reply to an address by Brigham Young, recited their sufferings at the hands of the Sioux, and told the whites that they could stay there for two years and have the use of firewood and timber, and that the young men of the Indians would watch their cattle and warn them of any danger. In return, the Indians asked for the use of teams to draw in their harvest, for assistance in house-building, plowing, and blacksmithing, and that a traffic in goods be established. An agreement to this effect was put in writing. . . .

During the winter of 1846-1847 preparations were under way to send an organization of pioneers across the plains and beyond the Rocky Mountains, to select a new dwelling-place for the Saints. The only "revelation" to Brigham Young found in the "Book of Doctrine and Covenants" is a direction about the organization and mission of this expedition. It was dated January 14, 1847, and it directed the organization of the pioneers into companies, with captains, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens, and a president and two counselors at their head, under charge of the Twelve. Each company was to provide its own equipment, and to take seeds and farming implements. . . .

The order of march was intelligently arranged, with a view to the probability of meeting Indians who, if not dangerous to life, had little regard for personal property. The Indians of the Platte region were notorious thieves, but had not the reputation as warriors of their northern neighbors. The regulations required that each private should walk constantly beside his wagon, leaving it only

---

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

by his officer's command. In order to make as compact a force as possible, two wagons were to move abreast whenever this could be done. Every man was to keep his weapons loaded, and special care was insisted upon that the caps, flints, and locks should be in good condition. They had with them one small cannon mounted on wheels. . . .

More than one day's march was now made without finding water or grass. Banks of snow were observed on the near-by elevations, and overcoats were very comfortable at night. On June 26 they reached the South Pass, where the waters running to the Atlantic and to the Pacific separate. They found, however, no well-marked dividing ridge—only, as Pratt described it, “a quietly undulating plain or prairie, some fifteen or twenty miles in length and breadth, thickly covered with wild sage.” There were good pasture and plenty of water, and they met there a small party who were making the journey from Oregon to the States on horseback.

All this time the leaders of the expedition had no definite view of their final stopping-place. Whenever Young was asked by any of his party, as they trudged along, what locality they were aiming for, his only reply was that he would recognize the site of their new home when he saw it, and that they would surely go on as the Lord would direct them. . . .

The pioneers resumed their march on June 29 over a desolate country, traveling seventeen miles without finding grass or water, until they made their night camp on the Big Sandy. There they encountered clouds of mosquitoes, which made more than one subsequent camping-place very

---

## MORMON MIGRATION TO UTAH

---

uncomfortable. A march of eight miles the next morning brought them to Green River. Finding this stream 180 yards wide, and deep and swift, they stopt long enough to make two rafts, on which they successfully ferried over all their wagons without reloading them. . . .

On Monday, the 18th, Pratt again acted as advance explorer, and went ahead with one companion. Following a ravine on horseback for four miles, they then dismounted and climbed to an elevation from which, in the distance, they saw a level prairie which they thought could not be far from Great Salt Lake. The whole party advanced only six and a quarter miles that day, and six the next.

One day later Erastus Snow came up with them, and Pratt took him along as a companion in his advance explorations. They discovered a point where the travelers of the year before had ascended a hill to avoid a cañon through which a creek dashed rapidly. Following in their predecessors' footsteps, when they arrived at the top of this hill there lay stretched out before them "a broad, open valley about twenty miles wide and thirty long, at the north end of which the waters of the Great Salt Lake glistened in the sunbeams." . . .

Having made an inspection of the valley, the two explorers rejoined their party about ten o'clock that evening. The next day, with great labor, a road was cut through the cañon down to the valley, and on July 22 Pratt's entire company camped on City Creek, below the present Emigration Street in Salt Lake City. The next morning, after sending word of their discovery to Brigham Young, the whole party moved some two miles

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

farther north, and there, after prayer, the work of putting in a crop was begun. . . .

While Apostles like Snow might have been as transported with delight over the aspect of the valley as he profest to be, others of the party could see only a desolate, treeless plain, with sage-brush supplying the vegetation. To the women especially the outlook was most depressing.

The day after the first arrival of Brigham Young in Salt Lake Valley (Sunday, July 25) church services were held and the sacrament was administered. Young addrest his followers, indicating at the start his idea of his leadership and of the ownership of the land, which was then Mexican territory. . . .

The next day a party, including all the Twelve who were in the valley, set out to explore the neighborhood. They visited and bathed in Great Salt Lake, climbed and named Ensign Peak, and met a party of Utah Indians, who made signs that they wanted to trade. On their return Young explained to the people his idea of an exploration of the country to the west and north.

Meanwhile, those left in the valley had been busy staking off fields, irrigating them, and planting vegetables and grain. Some buildings, among them a blacksmith shop, were begun. The members of the battalion, about four hundred of whom had now arrived, constructed a "bowery." Camps of Utah Indians were visited, and the white men witnessed their method of securing for food the abundant black crickets, by driving them into an enclosure fenced with brush, which they set on fire.

On July 28, after a council of the Quorum had

---

## MORMON MIGRATION TO UTAH

---

been held, the site of the Temple was selected by Brigham Young, who waved his hand and said: "Here is the forty acres for the Temple. The city can be laid out perfectly square, east and west." The forty acres were a few days later reduced to ten, but the site then chosen is that on which the big Temple now stands. It was also decided that the city should be laid out in lots measuring ten by twenty rods, each, eight lots to a block, with streets eight rods wide, and sidewalks twenty feet wide; each house to be erected in the center of a lot, and twenty feet from the front line. Land was also reserved for four parks of ten acres each.

Men were at once sent into the mountains to secure logs for cabins, and work on adobe huts was also begun. On August 7 those of the Twelve present selected their "inheritances," each taking a block near the Temple. A week later the Twelve, in council, selected the blocks which companies under each should settle. The city as then laid out covered a space nearly four miles long and three broad.

## DR. MORTON'S INTRODUCTION OF ANASTHETIC ETHER

(1846)

### I

#### THE "ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA" ACCOUNT<sup>1</sup>

When, toward the close of last century, the brilliant discoveries of Priestly gave an impetus to chemical research, the properties of gases and vapors began to be more closely investigated, and the belief was then entertained that many of them would become of great medicinal value. In 1800 Sir Humphry Davy, experimenting on nitrous oxide gas, discovered its anesthetic properties, and described the effects it had on himself when inhaled, with the view of relieving local pain. He suggested its employment in surgery in the following words: "As nitrous oxid, in its extensive operation, seems capable of destroying physical pain, it may probably be used with advantage in

<sup>1</sup> From the ninth edition of the "Britannica." Dr. Morton's distinction in this matter lies in the fact that no one before him had ever put the combination of handkerchief, liquid ether, and patient into such correlation that an epoch of continuous use of anesthesia was initiated and thereafter continued. Surgical anesthesia up to that time had not been practised, altho dreamed of and hoped for; but it then followed almost immediately. Dr. Morton's work was a final demonstration—one not reached before, and which has endured to the present day.

---

## PAINLESS SURGERY INTRODUCED

---

surgical operations in which no great effusion of blood takes place." His suggestion, however, remained unheeded for nearly half a century. The inhalation of sulfuric ether for the relief of asthma and other lung affections, had been employed by Dr. Pearson, of Birmingham, as early as 1785; and in 1805 Dr. Warren, of Boston, U. S., used this treatment in the later stages of pulmonary consumption. In 1818 Faraday showed that the inhalation of the vapor of sulfuric ether produced anesthetic effects similar to those of nitrous oxide gas; and this property of ether was also shown by the American physicians, Godman (1822) Jackson (1833), Wood and Bache (1834).

These observations, however, appear to have been regarded in the light of mere scientific curiosities and subjects for lecture-room experiment, rather than as facts capable of being applied practically in the treatment of disease, till December, 1844, when Dr. Horace Wells, a dentist of Hartford, Connecticut, underwent in his own person the operation of tooth extraction while rendered insensible by nitrous oxid gas. Satisfied, from further experience, that teeth could be extracted in this way without pain, Dr. Wells proposed to establish the practise of painless dentistry under the influence of gas; but in consequence of an unfortunate failure in an experiment at Boston, he abandoned the project. On September 30, 1846, Dr. William T. G. Morton,<sup>2</sup> a dentist of Boston, employed the vapor of sulfuric ether to pro-

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Morton was afterward a doctor of medicine. He practised dentistry for a time in Boston, in order to earn the money with which to pursue his studies in the Medical School of Harvard.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

cure general anesthesia in a case of tooth extraction, and therafter administered it in cases requiring surgical operation with complete success. This great achievement marked a new era in surgery. Operations were performed in America in numerous instances under ether inhalation, the result being only to establish more firmly its value as a successful anesthetic. The news of the discovery reached England on December 17th, 1846. On December 19th, Mr. Robinson, a dentist in London, and on the 21st, Mr. Liston, the eminent surgeon, operated on patients anesthetized by ether; and the practise soon became general both in Great Britain and on the Continent.

## II

### DR. MORTON'S OWN ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPERIMENT ON HIMSELF<sup>1</sup>

In November, 1844, Dr. Morton entered the Harvard Medical School in Boston in a regular course as a matriculate and attended lectures for two years, expecting soon to receive his full degree. While pursuing his studies and practising dentistry at the same time as a means of earning the money necessary to continue them, his attention was drawn vividly to the pain attending certain severe dental

<sup>1</sup> From "Memoranda Relating to the Discovery of Surgical Anesthesia and Dr. William T. G. Morton's Relations to this Event," by William James Morton, M.D. Printed in the *Post Graduate* for April, 1905.

---

## PAINLESS SURGERY INTRODUCED

---

operations. The suffering involved made a deep impression upon his mind and he set about to discover some means to alleviate it.

He read in his text-books extensively upon the subject, and finally began a series of experiments upon insects, fish, dogs, and lastly upon himself. Satisfied that his favorite spaniel, "Nig," had not been harmed by the inhalation of sulfuric ether vapor, even subsequent to a state of complete unconsciousness, he determined to inhale the ether himself. In his memoir to the Academy of Arts and Sciences, at Paris, presented by M. Arago, in the autumn of 1847, he thus describes the experiment, and his next almost immediate experiment upon a patient:

"Taking the tube and flask, I shut myself up in my room, seated myself in the operating chair, and commenced inhaling. I found the ether so strong that it partially suffocated me, but produced no decided effect. I then saturated my handkerchief and inhaled it from that. I looked at my watch and soon lost consciousness. As I recovered, I felt a numbness in my limbs, with a sensation like nightmare, and would have given the world for some one to come and arouse me. I thought for a moment I should die in that state, and the world would only pity or ridicule my folly. At length I felt a slight tingling of the blood in the end of my third finger, and made an effort to touch it with my thumb, but without success. At a second effort, I touched it, but there seemed to be no sensation. I gradually raised my arm and pinched my thigh but I could see that sensation was imperfect. I attempted to rise from my chair, but fell back. Gradually I regained power over my limbs and

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

found that I had been insensible between seven and eight minutes.

"Delighted with the success of this experiment, I immediately announced the result to the persons employed in my establishment, and waited impatiently for some one upon whom I could make a fuller trial. Toward evening, a man residing in Boston came in, suffering great pain, and wishing to have a tooth extracted. He was afraid of the operation, and asked if he could be mesmerized. I told him I had something better, and saturating my handkerchief, gave it to him to inhale. He became unconscious almost immediately. It was dark, and Dr. Hayden held the lamp while I extracted a firmly-rooted bicuspid tooth. There was not much alteration in the pulse and no relaxing of the muscles. He recovered in a minute and knew nothing of what had been done for him. He remained for some time talking about the experiment. This was on the 30th of September, 1846."

The first public notice of this event appeared in the Boston *Daily Journal* of October 1, 1846, in the following terms:

"Last evening, as we were informed by a gentleman who witnessed the operation, an ulcerated tooth was extracted from the mouth of an individual without giving him the slightest pain. He was put into a kind of sleep, by inhaling a preparation, the effects of which lasted for about three-quarters of a minute, just long enough to extract the tooth."

This publication induced the eminent surgeon, Dr. Henry J. Bigelow, to visit Dr. Morton's office, and he was present at a large number of successful inhalations of ether vapor by the new method in

---

## PAINLESS SURGERY INTRODUCED

---

which teeth were extracted without pain. So impressed was he with the magnitude of the event and the perfection of the method of anesthetic inhalation in Morton's hands, that he at once warmly espoused Morton's desire to make public demonstration of his method. Largely through his instrumentality, permission was secured from Dr. John C. Warren, senior surgeon of the Massachusetts General Hospital, to make trial of the new method, and on October 16, 1846, at this hospital, occurred the first public demonstration of surgical anesthesia, in the presence of the surgical and medical staffs in an amphitheater crowded to overflowing with students and physicians. . . .

The trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, quickly following the public demonstration of October, 1846, made a report according the honor and credit of the discovery to Dr. Morton, and presented him with a silver box containing \$1,000, "In honor of the ether discovery of September 30, 1846," adding the further inscription, "He has become poor in a cause which has made the world his debtor." Later on Dr. Morton received a divided Montyon prize from the French Academy of Sciences, the "Cross of the Order of Wasa, Sweden and Norway," and the "Cross of the Order of St. Vladimir, Russia." In the public gardens of Boston, Mass., a monument was erected to "commemorate the discovery that the inhalation of ether causes insensibility to pain." The inscription continues, "First proved to the world at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, October, 1846." Dr. Morton's deed, tho not his name, is thus honored. Yet another monument stands over Dr. Morton's

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

grave in Mt. Auburn Cemetery near Boston, "erected by citizens of Boston," bearing the following inscription written by the late Dr. Jacob Bigelow: "William T. G. Morton, inventor and revealer of anesthetic inhalation, before whom, in all time, surgery was agony, by whom pain in surgery was averted and annulled, since whom science has control of pain."

On the outside walls of the new Public Library in Boston are memorial tablets with about 500 names of writers, artists, and scientists. Here Boston inscribed Dr. Morton's name. A still more eloquent expression of the gratitude of Massachusetts is the inscription of Dr. Morton's name upon the base of the dome in the new chamber of the House of Representatives in the State House in Boston, among the selected 53 of Massachusetts' most famous citizens—"Names selected," as stated at the time of the event, "in such a way that they shall either mark an epoch, or designate a man who has turned the course of events." The following names will indicate the general trend of the selection: Morse, Morton, Bell, Emerson, Hawthorne, Holmes, Longfellow, Lowell, Edwards, Channing, Endicott, Winthrop, John Adams, J. Q. Adams, Webster, Sumner, Choate, Everett, Bowditch, and others.

## HOW WAR WITH MEXICO WAS DECLARED

(1846)

BY JAMES G. BLAINE<sup>1</sup>

By a suggestive coincidence, the practical abandonment of the line of 54° 40' by the administration<sup>2</sup> was contemporaneous with the outbreak of the Mexican War. The modified resolution of notice to Great Britain was finally passed in both branches of Congress on the 23d of April, and on the succeeding day the first blood was shed in that contest between the two republics which was destined to work such important results in the future and fortunes of both.

<sup>1</sup> From Blaine's "Twenty Years of Congress." By permission of Mrs. Walter Damrosch and James G. Blaine, Jr., owners of the copyright. Copyright, 1884.

William Allen Butler, the eminent New York lawyer, author of "Nothing to Wear," in his "Retrospect of Forty Years," published in 1911, gives the following succinct account of the causes of the Mexican War: "The annexation of Texas had been resented by Mexico, but she was not strong enough to make it a cause of war. The Polk Administration, dominated by the Southern slave power, was eager for further expansion and the acquisition of new territory. Mexico found herself constantly harassed by the demands of the Texans on the western border line for the extension of the boundary of their State to the Rio Grande and the disputes over this question naturally led up to hostilities. General Taylor made a hostile advance which was followed by an invasion of American territory by Mexican troops. A number of American soldiers were killed on American soil. After this, war was inevitable."

<sup>2</sup> See pages 26-35 of this volume for Blaine's account of the "Fifty-four—Forty or Fight" controversy.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

The army of occupation in Texas, commanded by General Zachary Taylor, had, during the preceding winter, been moving westward with the view of encamping in the valley of the Rio Grande. On the 28th of March General Taylor took up his position on the banks of the river, opposite Matamoras, and strengthened himself by the erection of field-works. General Ampudia, in command of the Mexican army stationed at Matamoros, was highly excited by the arrival of the American army, and on the 12th of April notified General Taylor to break up his camp within twenty-four hours, and to retire beyond the Nueces River. In the event of his failure to comply with these demands, Ampudia announced that "arms, and arms alone, must decide the question." According to the persistent claim of the Mexican Government, the Nueces River was the western boundary of Texas; and the territory between that river and the Rio Grande—a breadth of one hundred and fifty miles on the coast—was held by Mexico to be a part of her domain, and General Taylor consequently an invader of her soil. No reply was made to Ampudia; and on the 24th of April General Arista, who had succeeded to the command of the Mexican army, advised General Taylor that "he considered hostilities commenced, and should prosecute them."

Directly after this notification was received, General Taylor dispatched a party of dragoons, sixty-three in number, officers and men, up the valley of the Rio Grande, to ascertain whether the Mexicans had crossed the river. They encountered a force much larger than their own, and after a short engagement, in which some seventeen were

## WAR DECLARED WITH MEXICO

killed and wounded, the Americans were surrounded, and compelled to surrender. When intelligence of this affair reached the United States, the war-spirit rose high among the people. "Our country has been invaded," and "American blood spilled on American soil," were the cries heard on every side.

In the very height of this first excitement, without waiting to know whether the Mexican Government would avow or disavow the hostile act, President Polk, on the 11th of May, sent a most aggressive message to Congress, "invoking its prompt action to recognize the existence of war, and to place at the disposition of the Executive the means of prosecuting the contest with vigor, and thus hastening the restoration of peace." As soon as the message was read in the House, a bill was introduced authorizing the President to call out a force of fifty thousand men, and giving him all the requisite power to organize, arm, and equip them. The preamble declared that "war existed by the act of Mexico," and this gave rise to an animated and somewhat angry discussion. The Whigs felt that they were placed in an embarrassing attitude. They must either vote for what they did not believe, or, by voting against the bill, incur the odium which always attaches to the party that fails by a hair's-breadth to come to the defense of the country when war is imminent.

Prominent Whigs believed, that, as an historical and geographical fact, the river Nueces was the western boundary of Texas, and that the President, by assuming the responsibility of sending an army of occupation into the country west of that river, pending negotiations with Mexico, had

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

taken a hostile and indefensible step. But all agreed that it was too late to consider anything except the honor of the country, now that actual hostilities had begun. The position of the Whigs was as clearly defined by their speakers as was practicable in the brief space allowed for discussion of the war bill. Against the protest of many, it was forced to a vote, after a two hours' debate. The administration expected the declaration to be unanimous; but there were fourteen members of the House who accepted the responsibility of defying the war feeling of the country by voting "no"—an act which required no small degree of moral courage and personal independence. John Quincy Adams headed the list. The other gentlemen were all Northern Whigs, or pronounced Free-Soilers.

The Senate considered the bill on the ensuing day, and passed it after a very able debate, in which Mr. Calhoun bore a leading part. He earnestly deprecated the necessity of the war, tho accused by Benton, of plotting to bring it on. Forty Senators voted for it, and but two against it—Thomas Clayton, of Delaware, and John Davis, of Massachusetts. Mr. Crittenden, of Kentucky, and Mr. Upham, of Vermont, when their names were called, responded "Ay, except the preamble." The bill was promptly approved by the President, and on the 13th of May, 1846, the two republics were declared to be at war. In the South and West, from the beginning, the war was popular. In the North and East it was unpopular. The gallant bearing of our army, however, changed in large degree the feeling in sections where the war had been opposed. No finer body of men ever enlisted in an heroic enterprise than those who vol-

---

## WAR DECLARED WITH MEXICO

---

united to bear the flag in Mexico. They were young, ardent, enthusiastic, brave almost to recklessness, with a fervor of devotion to their country's honor. The march of Taylor from the Rio Grande, ending with the unexpected victory against superior numbers at Buena Vista, kept the country in a state of excitement and elation, and in the succeeding year elevated him to the Presidency. Not less splendid in its succession of victories was the march of Scott from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, where he closed his triumphal journey by taking possession of the capital, and enabling his government to dictate terms of peace.

For the first and only time in our political history, an administration conducting a war victorious at every step, steadily lost ground in the country. The House of Representatives which declared war on the 11th of May, 1846, was Democratic by a large majority. The House elected in the ensuing autumn amid the resounding acclamations of Taylor's memorable victory at Monterey<sup>8</sup> had a decided Whig majority.

This political reverse was due to three causes—the enactment of the tariff of 1846, which offended the manufacturing interest of the country; the receding of the administration on the Oregon question, which embarrassed the position and wounded the pride of the Northern Democrats; and the wide-spread apprehension that the war was undertaken for the purpose of extending and perpetuating slavery. The almost unanimous Southern vote for the hasty surrender of the line of

<sup>8</sup> At Monterey, Mexico, after three days of fighting, General Taylor, in September, 1846, with 6,500 men, defeated the Mexicans, numbering about 10,000.

---

## **GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY**

---

54° 40', on which so much had been staked in the Presidential campaign, gave the Whigs an advantage in the popular canvass. The contrast between the boldness with which the Polk Administration had marched our army upon the territory claimed by Mexico, and the prudence with which it had retreated from a contest with Great Britain, after all our antecedent boasting, exposed the Democrats to merciless ridicule. Clever speakers, who were numerous in the Whig party at that day, did not fail to see and seize their advantage.

## THE STORMING OF CHAPULTEPEC AND THE ENTRY INTO MEXICO

(1847)

BY GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT<sup>1</sup>

At the end of another series of arduous and brilliant operations, of more than forty-eight hours' continuance, this glorious army hoisted, on the morning of the 14th, the colors of the United States on the walls of this palace.

This city stands upon a slight swell of ground, near the center of an irregular basin, and is girdled with a ditch in its greater extent—a navigable canal of great breadth and depth—very difficult to bridge in the presence of an enemy, and serving at once for drainage, custom-house purposes, and military defense; leaving eight entrances or gates over arches, each of which we found defended by a system of strong works, that seemed to require nothing but some men and guns to be impregnable. . . .

After a close personal survey of the southern

<sup>1</sup> From Scott's official report, written at the National Palace in Mexico, September 18, 1847. Scott, a native of Virginia, died at West Point in 1866. He entered the army as a captain in 1808, served in the war of 1812, as already set forth in Volume V; became a brevet major-general in 1814 and commanded in South Carolina during the Nullification troubles of 1832. He served afterward against the Seminoles and Creeks, became Commander-in-Chief in 1841, and commanded in Mexico during the war with that country. Scott

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

gates, covered by Pillow's division and Riley's brigade, and Twigg's, with four times our numbers concentrated in our immediate front, I determined, on the 11th, to avoid that network of obstacles, and to seek, by a sudden inversion to the southwest and west, less unfavorable approaches.

The first step in the new movement was to carry Chapultepec, a natural and isolated mound, of great elevation, strongly fortified at its base, on its acclivities and heights. Besides a numerous garrison, here was the military college of the republic, with a large number of sub-lieutenants and other students. Those works were within direct gunshot of the village of Tacubaya, and, until carried, we could not approach the city on the west without making a circuit too wide and too hazardous.

Both columns now advanced with an alacrity that gave assurance of prompt success. The batteries, seizing opportunities, threw shots and shells upon the enemy over the heads of our men, with good effect, particularly at every attempt to reinforce the works from without to meet our assault.

The broken acclivity was still to be ascended, and a strong redoubt, midway, to be carried, before reaching the castle on the heights. The advance of our brave men, led by brave officers,

captured Vera Cruz in March, 1847, won the battle of Cerro Gordo in April, Contreras and Churubusco in August, Molino del Rey and Chapultepec in September, and entered the city of Mexico in the same month. Scott was now made brevet lieutenant-general. He commanded the Northern army at the outbreak of the Civil War, but retired from active service in the autumn of 1861. In 1852 Scott was the Whig candidate for President, but was badly defeated.

---

## THE STORMING OF CHAPULTEPEC

---

tho necessarily slow, was unwavering, over rocks, chasms, and mines, and under the hottest fire of cannon and musketry. The redoubt now yielded to resistless valor, and the shouts that followed announced to the castle the fate that impended. The enemy were steadily driven from shelter to shelter. The retreat allowed not time to fire a single mine, without the certainty of blowing up friend and foe. Those who at a distance attempted to apply matches to the long trains were shot down by our men. There was death below, as well as above ground.

At length the ditch and wall of the main work were reached; the scaling-ladders were brought up and planted by the storming parties; some of the daring spirits first in the assault were cast down—killed or wounded; but a lodgment was soon made; streams of heroes followed; all opposition was overcome, and several of the regimental colors flung out from the upper walls, amid long-continued shouts and cheers, which sent dismay into the capital. No scene could have been more animating or glorious. . . .

At a junction of roads, we first passed one of the formidable systems of city defenses, and it had not a gun!—a strong proof: 1. That the enemy had expected us to fall in the attack upon Chapultepec, even if we meant anything more than a feint; 2. That, in either case, we designed, in his belief, to return and double our forces against the southern gates, a delusion kept up by the active demonstrations of Twiggs and the forces posted on that side; and 3. That advancing rapidly from the reduction of Chapultepec, the enemy had not time to shift guns—our previous captures

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

had left him, comparatively, but few—from the southern gates.

Within those disgarnished works I found our troops engaged in a street fight against the enemy posted in gardens, at windows, and on housetops—all flat, with parapets. Worth<sup>2</sup> ordered forward the mountain-howitzers of Cadwalader's brigade, preceded by skirmishers and pioneers, with pick-axes and crowbars, to force windows and doors, or to burrow through walls. The assailants were soon in an equality of position fatal to the enemy. By eight o'clock in the evening, Worth had carried two batteries in this suburb. According to my instructions, he here posted guards and sentinels, and placed his troops under shelter for the night. There was but one more obstacle—the San Cosme gate (custom-house) between him and the great square in front of the cathedral and palace—the heart of the city; and that barrier, it was known, could not, by daylight, resist our siege guns thirty minutes. . . .

At about 4 o'clock next morning (September 14) a deputation of the *ayuntamiento* (city council) waited upon me to report that the Federal Government and the army of Mexico had fled from the capital some three hours before, and to demand terms of capitulation in favor of the church, the citizens, and the municipal authorities. I promptly replied, that I would sign no capitulation; that the city had been virtually in our pos-

<sup>2</sup> General William J. Worth, who had been second in command at Monterey, and afterward served under Scott in the campaign ending in the city of Mexico. He died in Texas in 1849. To his memory was erected the Worth monument that stands on Fifth Avenue, New York, facing Madison Square.

---

## THE STORMING OF CHAPULTEPEC

---

session from the time of the lodgments effected by Worth and Quitman<sup>\*</sup> the day before; that I regretted the silent escape of the Mexican army; that I should levy upon the city a moderate contribution, for special purposes; and that the American army should come under no terms, not *self-imposed*—such only as its own honor, the dignity of the United States, and the spirit of the age should, in my opinion, imperiously demand and impose. . . .

At the termination of the interview with the city deputation, I communicated, about daylight, orders to Worth and Quitman to advance slowly and cautiously (to guard against treachery) toward the heart of the city, and to occupy its stronger and more commanding points. Quitman proceeded to the great plaza or square, planted guards, and hoisted the colors of the United States on the national palace—containing the halls of Congress and executive apartments of Federal Mexico.

<sup>\*</sup> General John A. Quitman, a native of Rhinebeck, N. Y., and afterward Governor of Mississippi.

## THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN CALIFORNIA

(1847)

BY JOHN S. HITTELL<sup>1</sup>

As Edmund Hammond Hargraves is the hero of the Australian, so is James W. Marshall of the Californian, gold discovery. Marshall, in a letter dated January 28, 1856, and addrest to Charles E. Pickett, gave the following account of the gold discovery:

"Toward the end of August, 1847, Captain Sutter and I formed a copartnership to build and run a sawmill upon a site selected by myself (since known as Coloma). We employed P. L. Weimer and family to remove from the Fort (Sutter's Fort) to the mill-site, to cook and labor for us. Nearly the first work done was the building of a double log cabin, about half a mile from the mill-site. We commenced the mill about Christmas. Some of the mill-hands wanted a cabin near the mill. This was built, and I went to the Fort to superintend the construction of the mill-irons, leaving orders to cut a narrow ditch where the race was to be made. Upon my return, 1848, I found the ditch cut, as directed, and those who were working on the same were doing so at a

<sup>1</sup> Printed in Hubert Howe Bancroft's "West American History." Given here by permission of Mr. Bancroft.

---

## GOLD DISCOVERED IN CALIFORNIA

---

great disadvantage, expending their labor upon the head of the race instead of the foot.

"I immediately changed the course of things, and upon the 19th of the same month of January discovered the gold near the lower end of the race, about two hundred yards below the mill. William Scott was the second man to see the metal. He was at work at a carpenter's bench near the mill. I showed the gold to him. Alexander Stephens, James Brown, Henry Bigler, and William Johnston were likewise working in front of the mill, framing the upper story. They were called up next, and, of course, saw the precious metal. P. L. Weimer and Charles Bennett were at the old double log cabin (where Hastings and Company afterward kept a store).

"In the mean time we put in some wheat and peas, nearly five acres, across the river. In February the Captain (Captain Sutter) came to the mountains for the first time. Then we consummated a treaty with the Indians, which had been previously negotiated. The tenor of this was that we were to pay them two hundred dollars yearly in goods, at Yerba Buena prices, for the joint possession and occupation of the land with them; they agreeing not to kill our stock, viz., horses, cattle, hogs, or sheep, nor burn the grass within the limits fixt by the treaty. At the same time Captain Sutter, myself, and Isaac Humphrey, entered into a copartnership to dig gold. A short time afterward, P. L. Weimer moved away from the mill, and was away two or three months, when he returned. With all the events that subsequently occurred, you and the public are well informed."

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

This is the most precise and is generally considered to be the most correct account of the gold discovery. Other versions of the story have been published, however, and the following, from an article published in the *Coloma Argus*, in the latter part of the year 1855, is one of them. The statement was evidently derived from Weimer, who lives at Coloma:

"That James W. Marshall picked up the first piece of gold is beyond doubt. Peter L. Weimer, who resides in this place, states positively that Marshall picked up the gold in his presence; they both saw it, and each spoke at the same time, 'What's that yellow stuff?' Marshall, being a step in advance, picked it up. This first piece of gold is now in the possession of Mrs. Weimer, and weighs six pennyweights eleven grains. The piece was given to her by Marshall himself. The dam was finished early in January, the frame for the mill also erected, and the flume and bulkhead completed. It was at this time that Marshall and Weimer adopted the plan of raising the gate during the night to wash out sand from the mill-race, closing it during the day, when work would be continued with shovels, etc.

"Early in February—the exact day is not remembered—in the morning, after shutting off the water, Marshall and Weimer walked down the race together to see what the water had accomplished during the night. Having gone about twenty yards below the mill, they both saw the piece of gold before mentioned, and Marshall picked it up. After an examination, the gold was taken to the cabin of Weimer, and Mrs. Weimer instructed to boil it in saleratus water; but she, being engaged

---

## GOLD DISCOVERED IN CALIFORNIA

---

in making soap, pitched the piece into the soap-kettle, where it was boiled all day and all night. The following morning the strange stuff was fished out of the soap, all the brighter for the boiling.

“Discussion now commenced, and all exprest the opinion that perhaps the yellow substance might be gold. Little was said on the subject; but every one each morning searched in the race for more, and every day found several small scales. The Indians also picked up many small thin pieces, and carried them always to Mrs. Weimer. About three weeks after the first piece was obtained, Marshall took the fine gold, amounting to between two and three ounces, and went to San Francisco to have the strange metal tested. On his return he informed Weimer that the stuff was gold.

“All hands now began to search for the ‘root of all evil.’ Shortly after, Captain Sutter came to Coloma, and he and Marshall assembled the Indians and bought of them a large tract of country about Coloma, in exchange for a lot of beads and a few cotton handkerchiefs. They, under color of this Indian title, required one-third of all the gold dug on their domain, and collected at this rate until the fall of 1848, when a mining party from Oregon declined paying ‘tithes’ as they called it.

“During February, 1848, Marshall and Weimer went down the river to Mormon Island, and there found scales of gold on the rocks. Some weeks later they sent Mr. Henderson, Sydney Willis, and Mr. Fifield, Mormons, down there to dig, telling them that that place was better than Coloma. These were the first miners at Mormon Island.”

---

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

Marshall was a man of an active, enthusiastic mind, and he at once attached great importance to his discovery. His ideas, however, were vague; he knew nothing about gold-mining; he did not know how to take advantage of what he had found. Only an experienced gold-miner could understand the importance of the discovery and make it of practical value to all the world. That gold-miner, fortunately, was near at hand; his name was Isaac Humphrey. He was residing in the town of San Francisco, in the month of February, when a Mr. Bennett, one of the party employed at Marshall's mill, went down to that place with some of the dust to have it tested; for it was still a matter of doubt whether this yellow metal really was gold. Bennett told his errand to a friend whom he met in San Francisco, and this friend introduced him to Humphrey, who had been a gold-miner in Georgia, and was therefore competent to pass an opinion.

Humphrey looked at the dust, pronounced it gold at the first glance, and express a belief that the diggings must be rich. He made inquiries about the place where the gold was found, and subsequent inquiries about the trustworthiness of Mr. Bennett, and on March 7th he was at the mill. He tried to induce several of his friends in San Francisco to go with him; they all thought his expedition a foolish one, and he had to go alone. He found that there was some talk about the gold, and persons would occasionally go about looking for pieces of it; but no one was engaged in mining, and the work of the mill was going on as usual. On the 8th he went out prospecting with a pan, and satisfied himself that the country

---

## **GOLD DISCOVERED IN CALIFORNIA**

---

in that vicinity was rich in gold. He then made a rocker and commenced the business of washing gold, and thus began the business of mining in California.

Others saw how he did it, followed his example, found that the work was profitable, and abandoned all other occupations. The news of their success spread; people flocked to the place, learned how to use the rocker, discovered new diggings, and in the course of a few months the country had been overturned by a social and industrial revolution.

About the middle of March, P. B. Reading, an American, now a prominent and wealthy citizen of the State, then the owner of a large ranch on the western bank of the Sacramento River, near where it issues from the mountains, came to Coloma, and after looking about at the diggings, said that if similarity in the appearance of the country could be taken as a guide there must be gold in the hills near his ranch; and he went off, declaring his intention to go back and make an examination of them. John Bidwell, another American, now a wealthy and influential citizen, then residing on his ranch on the bank of Feather River, came to Coloma about a week later, and he said there must be gold near his ranch, and he went off with expressions similar to those used by Reading. In a few weeks news came that Reading had found diggings near Clear Creek, at the head of the Sacramento Valley, and was at work there with his Indians; and not long after, it was reported that Bidwell was at work with his Indians on a rich bar of Feather River, since called "Bidwell's Bar."

Altho Bennett had arrived at San Francisco

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

in February with some of the dust, the editors of the town—for two papers were published in the place at the time—did not hear of the discovery till some weeks later. The first published notice of the gold appeared in the *Californian* (published in San Francisco) on March 15th, as follows: “In the newly made raceway of the sawmill recently erected by Captain Sutter, on the American Fork,<sup>2</sup> gold has been found in considerable quantities. One person brought thirty dollars’ worth to New Helvetia, gathered there in a short time. California, no doubt, is rich in mineral wealth; great chances here for scientific capitalists. Gold has been found in almost every part of the country.”

It was not until more than three months after Marshall’s discovery that the San Francisco papers stated that gold-mining had become a regular and profitable business in the new placers. The *Californian* of April 26th said: “From a gentleman just from the gold region we learn that many new discoveries of gold have very recently been made, and it is fully ascertained that a large extent of country abounds with that precious mineral. Seven men, with picks and spades, gathered one thousand six hundred dollars worth in fifteen days. Many persons are settling on the lands with the view of holding preemptions, but as yet every person takes the right to gather all he can without any regard to claims. The largest piece yet found is worth six dollars.”

The news spread, men came from all the settled parts of the territory, and as they came they went to work mining, and gradually they moved far-

<sup>2</sup>The American river is tributary to the Sacramento, and has three Forks—North, Middle, and South Forks.

---

## GOLD DISCOVERED IN CALIFORNIA

---

ther and farther from Coloma, and before the rainy season had commenced (in December) miners were washing rich auriferous dirt all along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, from the Feather to the Tuolumne River, a distance of one hundred fifty miles; and also over a space of about fifteen miles square, near the place now known as the town of Shasta, in the Coast Mountains, at the head of the Sacramento Valley. The whole country had been turned topsy-turvy; towns had been deserted, or left only to the women and children; fields had been left unreaped; herds of cattle went without any one to care for them. But gold-mining, which had become the great interest of the country, was not neglected. The people learned rapidly and worked hard.

In the latter part of 1848 adventurers began to arrive from Oregon, the Sandwich Islands, and Mexico. The winter found the miners with very little preparation, but most of them were accustomed to a rough manner of life in the Western wilds, and they considered their large profits an abundant compensation for their privations and hardships. The weather was so mild in December and January that they could work almost as well as in the summer, and the rain gave them facilities for washing such as they could not have in the dry season.

In September, 1848, the first rumors of the gold discovery began to reach New York; in October they attracted attention; in November people looked with interest for new reports; in December the news gained general credence, and a great excitement arose. Preparations were made for a migration to California by somebody in nearly

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

every town in the United States.<sup>8</sup> The great body of the emigrants went across the plains with ox or mule teams or around Cape Horn in sailing-vessels. A few took passage in the steamer by way of Panama.

Not fewer than one hundred thousand men, representing in their nativity every State in the Union, went to California that year. Of these, twenty thousand crossed the continent by way of the South Pass; and nearly all of them started from the Missouri River between Independence and St. Joseph, in the month of May. They formed an army; in daytime their trains filled up the roads for miles, and at night their camp-fires glittered in every direction about the places blest with grass and water. The excitement continued from 1850 to 1853; emigrants continued to come by land and sea, from Europe and America, and in the last-named year from China also. In 1854 the migration fell off, and since that time until the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad California received the chief accessions to her white population by the Panama steamers.

<sup>8</sup>This is no exaggeration. The New York *Tribune* in those days had a standing headline, "The Golden Chronicle," followed each day by about two columns of small items telling of companies formed all over the country, and going to California to find gold.

## THE CLAY COMPROMISE

(1850)

BY CARL SCHURZ<sup>1</sup>

When Congress met, in December, 1848, the last session under Polk's Presidency, it had to confront a state of things unexpected a year before. The discovery of rich gold mines in California had attracted thither from all parts of the country a sudden and unexampled emigration, increasing in volume from day to day. In a few months a population gathered there strong enough in numbers to authorize the organization of a State government. In any event, the character of that population and the adventurous nature of its pursuits rendered the establishment of some legal authority peculiarly pressing. Polk, therefore, strongly urged that the provisional military rule in New Mexico and California, which ought to have ceased with the war, should be superseded by legally organized territorial governments.

As to the slavery question, he recommended the extension of the Missouri Compromise line. Various schemes were proposed in Congress, provoking hot debates between pro-slavery and anti-slavery men. The excitement was increased by vigorous protests from the inhabitants of New Mexico and California against the introduction of

<sup>1</sup> From Schurz's "Life of Henry Clay." By permission of, and by arrangement with, the authorized publishers, Houghton, Mifflin Company. Copyright, 1887.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

slavery there; by an attempt on the part of Calhoun to organize a distinctively Southern party; and by threats that the Union would be dissolved in case the North insisted upon the exclusion of slavery from the new conquests; until finally, the impossibility of an agreement becoming evident, the Thirtieth Congress adjourned, leaving the decision of the great question to its successor. . . .

The slaveholding interest watched these proceedings with constantly increasing alarm. The territories taken from Mexico were eluding its grasp. Instead of adding to the strength of the South, they would increase the power of the free States. It was a terrible shock. The mere anticipation of it had brought forth suggestions of desperate remedies. The cry of disunion was raised with increasing frequency and violence. Many meant it only as a threat to frighten the North into concession. But there were not a few Southern men also who had regretfully arrived at the conclusion that the dissolution of the Union was necessary to the salvation of slavery. On the other hand, while every Southern legislature save one denounced the exclusion of slavery as a violation of Southern rights, every Northern legislature save one passed resolutions in favor of the Wilmot Proviso.<sup>2</sup> . . .

Clay, on January 29, 1850, unfolded his "comprehensive scheme of adjustment." His object was to save the Union, and he reasoned thus: The Union is threatened by the disunion spirit growing up in the South. That disunion spirit springs from an

<sup>2</sup>The Wilmot Proviso of 1846 prohibited slavery in territory that was about to be purchased from Mexico. It never became a law.

---

## THE CLAY COMPROMISE

---

apprehension that slavery is not safe in the Union. The disunion spirit must be disarmed by concessions calculated to quiet that apprehension. These concessions must be such as not to alarm the North. Clay proposed, in a set of resolutions to be followed by appropriate bills, a series of measures intended to compromise all conflicting interests and aspirations. The first declared that California should be speedily admitted as a State—of course, with her free-State constitution; the second, that, as slavery did not by law exist, and was not likely to be introduced in any of the territories acquired from Mexico, Congress should provide territorial governments for New Mexico and Utah, without any restriction as to slavery—thus sacrificing the Wilmot Proviso—without, however, authorizing slaveholders to take their slaves there—thus adjourning the slavery question as to those territories to a future day; the third and fourth, that a boundary line between Texas and New Mexico should be fixt, giving to Texas but little of the New Mexican territory she claimed, but granting her a certain sum of money for the payment of that part of her public debt for which, during her independent existence, her customs revenue had been pledged; the fifth, that it was inexpedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia without the consent of Maryland, etc.; the sixth, that the slave-trade in the District should be prohibited; the seventh, that a more effectual fugitive-slave law should be enacted; and the eighth, that Congress had no power to prohibit or obstruct the trade in slaves between the slaveholding States. The preamble declared the purpose of these resolutions to be "for the peace,

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

concord, and harmony of these States, to settle and adjust amicably all existing questions of controversy between them, arising out of the institution of slavery, upon a fair, equitable, and just basis."

This was Clay's plan of compromise. There was at once a rattling fusillade of objections and protests from Southern men, Whigs as well as Democrats. On February 5 Clay supported his plan of adjustment with a great speech. The infirmities of old age began to tell upon him. Walking up to the Capitol, he asked a friend who accompanied him, "Will you lend me your arm? I feel myself quite weak and exhausted this morning." He ascended the long flight of steps with difficulty, being several times obliged to stop in order to recover his breath. The friend suggested that he should defer his speech, as he was too ill to exert himself that day. "I consider our country in danger," replied Clay; "and if I can be the means in any measure of averting that danger, my health and life is of little consequence."

When he arrived at the Senate chamber, he beheld a spectacle well apt to inspire an orator. For several days his intention had been known to address the Senate on February 5, and from far and near—from Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and places still more distant—men and women had come in great numbers to hear him. The avenues of the Senate chamber were buzzing with an eager multitude who in vain struggled to gain access to the thronged galleries and the equally crowded floor. When Clay arose to speak, an outburst of applause in the chamber greeted him. The noise was heard without, and the great crowd

---

## THE CLAY COMPROMISE

---

assembled there raised such a shout that the orator could not make himself heard until the officers of the Senate had gone out and cleared the entrances. Clay's speech occupied two days. . . .

The debate which followed called forth all the great men of the Senate. On March 4 Calhoun appeared, gaunt and haggard, too ill to speak, but still full of that grim energy with which he had been for so many years defending the interests of slavery, calling them the rights of the South. His oration was read to the Senate by Mason of Virginia. Calhoun's mind was narrow, but within its narrow sphere acute. He saw with perfect clearness that slavery could not be saved within the Union, and that every compromise putting off the decisive crisis only made its final doom all the more certain. . . .

There he sat, the old champion of slavery, himself the picture of his doomed cause—a cause at war with the civilization of the age, vainly struggling against destiny—a cause which neither union nor disunion, neither eloquence in council, nor skill in diplomacy, nor bravery in battle, could save: there he sat, motionless like a statue, with the hand of death upon him; his dark eyes flashing with feverish luster from beneath his knitted brows; listening to his own words from another's mouth, and anxiously watching on the faces of those around their effect—words of mournful despair, heralding the coming fate, and, without hope, still trying to avert it by counseling impossible expedients. Four weeks later Calhoun closed his eyes forever, leaving his cherished cause to its doom. Clay and Webster were among those who strewed flowers of eulogy upon his grave.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

On July 22, nearly six months after the introduction of his resolutions, and two and a half months after the Committee of Thirteen had presented its report, Clay made his closing speech. Ever since January 28 he had been on the floor almost day after day, sometimes so ill that he could hardly drag his tottering limbs to the Senate chamber.

His patriotism was, however, not all meekness. In the same speech he severely censured the Abolitionists as reckless agitators, and denounced the Southern fire-eaters for their disunion tendencies, reflecting especially upon a member of the Nashville Convention, Rhett of South Carolina, who, after his return to Charleston, had in a public meeting openly proposed to hoist the standard of secession. When Clay had finished his appeal for peace and union, Barnwell of South Carolina, Calhoun's successor, rose and declared his dissatisfaction with Clay's remarks, "not a little disrespectful to a friend" whom he held very dear, and upon whose character he then proceeded to pronounce a warm eulogy, intimating that the opinions held and expressed by Mr. Rhett might possibly be those of South Carolina. Clay was quickly upon his feet. "Mr. President," he replied, "I said nothing with respect to the character of Mr. Rhett. I know him personally, and have some respect for him. But, if he pronounced the sentiment attributed to him of raising the standard of disunion and of resistance to the common government, whatever he has been, if he follows up that declaration by corresponding overt acts"—the old man's eye flashed and his voice rang out in a thundering peal—"he will be a traitor, and I

---

## THE CLAY COMPROMISE

---

hope he will meet the fate of a traitor!" Like an electric shock the word thrilled the audience, and volleys of applause broke forth from the crowded galleries.

After Clay's closing speech the voting began. Several Southern Senators, who at first had been bitterly opposed to Clay's plan, had gradually become persuaded. But the compromise had to suffer a disheartening defeat before achieving its victory. Amendments were offered in perplexing profusion. The Omnibus Bill was disfigured almost beyond recognition. At last, after a series of confusing manipulations, Clay himself inadvertently accepted an amendment offered by a Senator from Georgia, that, until a final settlement of the Texas boundary was effected with the assent of Texas, the territorial government of New Mexico should not go into operation east of the Rio Grande. As this was virtually delivering over New Mexico to Texas, the whole provision concerning New Mexico was struck out by the aid of friends of the compromise; and when on July 31 the bill was passed, there was nothing left in the "Omnibus" but the establishment of a territorial government for Utah. All the rest had been amended out of it. The compromise seemed to be lost.

The next day Clay appeared in the Senate once more to avow his devotion to the Union, and to defy its enemies; for he feared that, the compromise having failed, it might now be impossible to save it without the employment of force. "I stand here in my place," he said, "meaning to be unawed by any threats, whether they come from individuals or from States. I should deplore, as

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

much as any man living or dead, that arms should be raised against the authority of the Union, either by individuals or by States. But if, after all that has occurred, any one State, or the people of any State, choose to place themselves in military array against the Government of the Union, I am for trying the strength of the Government." The galleries broke out in applause, which was checked by the presiding officer. . . .

At last, on August 2, mortified, exhausted, broken in health, he gave up his leadership and went to Newport to rest and recuperate. Then, in Clay's absence, that proved true, which had been frequently urged against the Omnibus Bill, namely, that measures which could not be adopted when lumped together, might be adopted separately. . . .

When Clay returned to Washington in the last week of August, he found that the Senate had carried out the whole program laid down in his compromise resolutions seven months before, except the interdiction of the slave traffic in the District of Columbia. After a long debate, in which Clay with great emphasis express his expectation that slavery would pass away in the District, adding that he was glad of it, that bill, too, passed and became a law. The compromise of 1850 was then substantially complete. . . .

The compromise of 1850 was perhaps the best that could be made under the circumstances to effect a temporary truce. But no compromise could have been devised to keep the antagonistic forces of freedom and slavery permanently at peace. Calhoun was perfectly right in his conclusion that slavery, in order to exist with secu-

---

## THE CLAY COMPROMISE

---

rity in the Union, must rule it. It needed controlling political power—more Slave States, more representation, an absolute veto upon all legislation hostile to it. If slavery could not obtain this within the Union, and still desired to live, it had to try its fortunes outside. Calhoun's great error was to believe that slavery could survive at all in the nineteenth century. . . .

A prolific source of mischief later was the fugitive-slave law. No doubt a large number of slaves had in the course of time escaped from the South and found shelter in the North. No doubt the Northern States had been remiss in performing their constitutional obligations as to the return of fugitives, for in some of them the enforcement of the existing law was actually obstructed by State legislation. No doubt the South had in this respect occasion to complain. But an institution like slavery was naturally exposed to such losses. It would have been prudent to bear them in silence. It was certainly most unwise to make laws calculated to bring the most odious features of slavery home to a free people naturally impatient of its existence. This the fugitive-slave law did in a very provoking form. It gave United States commissioners the power, by summary process, to turn over a colored man or woman claimed as a fugitive slave to the claimant. It excluded from the evidence the testimony of the defendant. It "commanded" all good citizens, whenever summoned, to aid in the prompt and effective execution of the law, including the capture of the fugitive. It made the United States marshal liable for the full value of the slave, if a recaptured fugitive escaped from his custody.

## WEBSTER'S SEVENTH OF MARCH SPEECH

(1850)

BY JAMES G. BLAINE<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Webster delivered, on the 7th of March, the memorable speech which cost him the loss of so many of his stanch and lifelong friends. The anti-slavery Whigs of the North, who, as the discussion went on, had waited to be vindicated by the commanding argument of Mr. Webster, were dismayed and cast down by his unexpected utterance. Instead of arraigning the propagandists of slavery, he arraigned its opponents. Instead of indicting the Disunionists of the South, he poured out his wrath upon the Abolitionists of the North. He maintained that the North had unduly exaggerated the dangers of slavery extension at this crisis. California was coming in as a free State. Texas, north of 36° 30', if her boundary should extend so far, had been declared free in the articles of annexation. In the mountainous and sterile character of New Mexico and Utah he found a stronger prohibition of slavery than in any possible ordinance, enactment, or proviso placed on the statute-book by Congress.

<sup>1</sup> From Blaine's "Twenty Years of Congress." By permission of Mrs. Walter Damrosch and James G. Blaine, Jr., owners of the copyright. Copyright 1884.

---

## WEBSTER'S 7TH OF MARCH SPEECH

---

He would not, therefore, "reenact the Law of God." He would not force a quarrel with the South when nothing was to be gained. He would not irritate or causelessly wound the feelings of those who were just beginning to realize that they had lost in the issue put at stake in the Mexican War. The speech undoubtedly had great influence in the North, and caused many anti-slavery men to turn back. But on the other hand, it embittered thousands who pressed forward with sturdy principle and with a quickened zeal, not unmixed with resentment and a sense of betrayal. In many parts of the country, and especially in the Middle and Southern States, the speech was received with enthusiastic approval. But in New England, the loss of whose good opinion could not be compensated to Mr. Webster by the applause of a world outside, he never regained his hold upon the popular affection. New friends came to him, but they did not supply the place of the old friends, who for a lifetime had stood by him with unswerving principle and with ever-increasing pride.

Excitement and passion do not, however, always issue decrees and pronounce judgments of absolute right. In the zeal of that hour, Northern anti-slavery opinion failed to appreciate the influence which wrought so powerfully on the mind of Mr. Webster. He belonged with those who could remember the first President, who personally knew much of the hardships and sorrows of the Revolutionary period, who were born to poverty and reared in privation. To these, the formation of the Federal Government had come as a gift from Heaven, and they had heard from the lips

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

of the living Washington in his farewell words, that "the Union is the edifice of our real independence, the support of our tranquillity at home, our peace abroad, our prosperity, our safety, and of the very liberty which we so highly prize, that for this Union we should cherish a cordial, habitual, immovable attachment, and should discountenance whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned."

Mr. Webster had in his own lifetime seen the thirteen colonies grow to thirty powerful States. He had seen three millions of people, enfeebled and impoverished by a long struggle, increased eightfold in number, surrounded by all the comforts, charms, and securities of life. All this spoke to him of the Union and of its priceless blessings. He now heard its advantages discust, its perpetuity doubted, its existence threatened. A convention of slaveholding States had been called, to meet at Nashville, for the purpose of considering the possible separation of the sections. Mr. Webster felt that a generation had been born who were undervaluing their inheritance, and who might, by temerity, destroy it. Under motives inspired by these surroundings, he spoke for the preservation of the Union. He believed it to be seriously endangered. His apprehensions were ridiculed by many who, ten years after Mr. Webster was in his grave, saw for the first time how real and how terrible were the perils upon which those apprehensions were founded.

When the hour of actual conflict came, every patriot realized that a great magazine of strength for the Union was stored in the teachings of Mr. Webster. For thirty years preceding the Nullifi-

---

## WEBSTER'S 7TH OF MARCH SPEECH

---

cation troubles in South Carolina, the Government had been administered on the States'-rights theory, in which the power of the nation was subordinated, and its capacity to subdue the revolt of seceding States was dangerously weakened. His speech in reply to Hayne in 1830 was like an amendment to the Constitution. It corrected traditions, changed convictions, revolutionized conclusions. It gave to the friends of the Union the abundant logic which established the right and the power of the Government to preserve itself. A fame so lofty, a work so grand, can not be marred by one mistake, if mistake it be conceded. The thoughtful reconsideration of his severest critics must allow that Mr. Webster saw before him a divided duty, and that he chose the part which in his patriotic judgment was demanded by the supreme danger of the hour.

# “THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD”

(1850)

BY LEVI COFFIN<sup>1</sup>

The fugitives generally arrived in the night, and were secreted among the friendly colored people or hidden in the upper room of our house. They came alone or in companies, and in a few instances had a white guide to direct them.

One company of twenty-eight that crossed the Ohio River at Lawrenceburg, Indiana—twenty miles below Cincinnati—had for conductor a white man whom they had employed to assist them. The company of twenty-eight slaves referred to, all lived in the same neighborhood in Kentucky, and had been planning for some time how they could make their escape from slavery. This white man—John Fairfield—had been in the neighborhood for some weeks buying poultry, etc., for market, and tho among the whites he assumed to be very pro-slavery, the negroes soon found that he was their friend.

He was engaged by the slaves to help them across the Ohio River, and conduct them to Cin-

<sup>1</sup> Under this name were designated the methods by which Abolitionists in the North aided and protected slaves who ran away from their Southern masters. The routes over which slaves escaped ran mostly through Ohio and Pennsylvania, and thence to Canada. Coffin was actively engaged in the work in Cincinnati. His account is printed in Hart's "Source Book of American History."

---

## **"THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD"**

---

cinnati. They paid him some money which they had managed to accumulate. The amount was small, considering the risk the conductor assumed, but it was all they had. Several of the men had their wives with them, and one woman a little child with her, a few months old. John Fairfield conducted the party to the Ohio River, opposite the mouth of the Big Miami, where he knew there were several skiffs tied to the bank, near a wood-yard. The entire party crowded into three large skiffs or yawls, and made their way slowly across the river. The boats were overloaded and sank so deep that the passage was made in much peril. The boat John Fairfield was in was leaky, and began to sink when a few rods from the Ohio bank, and he sprang out on the sand-bar, where the water was two or three feet deep, and tried to drag the boat to the shore. He sank to his waist in mud and quick-sands, and had to be pulled out by some of the negroes. The entire party waded out through mud and water and reached the shore safely, tho all were wet, and several lost their shoes. They hastened along the bank toward Cincinnati, but it was now late in the night and daylight appeared before they reached the city.

Their plight was a most pitiable one. They were cold, hungry, and exhausted; those who had lost their shoes in the mud suffered from bruised and lacerated feet, while to add to their discomfort a drizzling rain fell during the latter part of the night. They could not enter the city for their appearance would at once proclaim them to be fugitives. When they reached the outskirts of the city, below Mill Creek, John Fairfield hid them as well as he could, in ravines that had been

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

washed in the sides of the steep hills, and told them not to move until he returned. He then went directly to John Hatfield, a worthy colored man, a deacon in the Zion Baptist church, and told his story. He had applied to Hatfield before, and knew him to be a great friend to the fugitives—one who had often sheltered them under his roof and aided them in every way he could. When he arrived, wet and muddy, at John Hatfield's house, he was scarcely recognized. He soon made himself and his errand known, and Hatfield at once sent a messenger to me, requesting me to come to his house without delay, as there were fugitives in danger. I went at once and met several prominent colored men who had also been summoned. While dry clothes and a warm breakfast were furnished to John Fairfield, we anxiously discuss the situation of the twenty-eight fugitives who were lying hungry and shivering, in the hills in sight of the city.

Several plans were suggested, but none seemed practicable. At last I suggested that some one should go immediately to a certain German livery stable in the city and hire two coaches, and that several colored men should go out in buggies and take the women and children from their hiding-places, then that the coaches and buggies should form a procession as if going to a funeral, and march solemnly along the road leading to Cumminsville, on the west side of Mill Creek. In the western part of Cumminsville was the Methodist Episcopal burying-ground, where a certain lot of ground had been set apart for the use of the colored people. They should pass this and continue on the Colerain pike till they reached a

---

## "THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD"

---

right-hand road leading to College Hill. At the latter place they would find a few colored families, living in the outskirts of the village, and could take refuge among them. Jonathan Cable, a Presbyterian minister, who lived near Farmer's College, on the west side of the village, was a prominent Abolitionist, and I knew that he would give prompt assistance to the fugitives.

I advised that one of the buggies should leave the procession at Cumminsville, after passing the burying-ground, and hasten to College Hill to apprise friend Cable of the coming of the fugitives, that he might make arrangements for their reception in suitable places. My suggestions and advice were agreed to, and acted upon as quickly as possible.

While the carriages and buggies were being procured, John Hatfield's wife and daughter, and other colored women of the neighborhood, busied themselves in preparing provisions to be sent to the fugitives. A large stone jug was filled with hot coffee, and this, together with a supply of bread and other provisions, was placed in a buggy and sent on ahead of the carriages, that the hungry fugitives might receive some nourishment before starting. The conductor of the party, accompanied by John Hatfield, went in the buggy, in order to apprise the fugitives of the arrangements that had been made, and have them in readiness to approach the road as soon as the carriages arrived. Several blankets were provided to wrap around the women and children, whom we knew must be chilled by their exposure to the rain and cold. The fugitives were very glad to get the supply of food; the hot coffee es-

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

pecially was a great treat to them, and much revived them. About the time they finished their breakfast the carriages and buggies drove up and halted in the road, and the fugitives were quickly conducted to them and placed inside. The women in the tight carriages wrapt themselves in the blankets, and the woman who had a young babe muffled it closely to keep it warm, and to prevent its cries from being heard. The little thing seemed to be suffering much pain, having been exposed so long to the rain and cold.

All the arrangements were carried out, and the party reached College Hill in safety, and were kindly received and cared for.

When it was known by some of the prominent ladies of the village that a large company of fugitives were in the neighborhood, they met together to prepare some clothing for them. Jonathan Cable ascertained the number and size of the shoes needed, and the clothes required to fit the fugitives for traveling, and came down in his carriage to my house, knowing that the Anti-Slavery Sewing Society had their depository there. I went with him to purchase the shoes that were needed, and my wife selected all the clothing we had that was suitable for the occasion; the rest was furnished by the noble women of College Hill.

I requested friend Cable to keep the fugitives as secluded as possible until a way could be provided for safely forwarding them on their way to Canada. Friend Cable was a stockholder in the Underground Railroad, and we consulted together about the best route, finally deciding on the line by way of Hamilton, West Elkton, Eaton, Paris, and Newport, Indiana. I wrote to one of my par-

---

## **"THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD"**

---

ticular friends at West Elkton, informing him that I had some valuable stock on hand which I wished to forward to Newport, and requested him to send three two-horse wagons—covered—to College Hill, where the stock was resting, in charge of Jonathan Cable.

The three wagons arrived promptly at the time mentioned, and a little after dark took in the party, together with another fugitive, who had arrived the night before, and whom we added to the company. They went through to West Elkton safely that night, and the next night reached Newport, Indiana. With little delay they were forwarded on from station to station through Indiana and Michigan to Detroit, having fresh teams and conductors each night, and resting during the day. I had letters from different stations, as they progressed, giving accounts of the arrival and departure of the train, and I also heard of their safe arrival on the Canada shore.

## JENNY LIND'S ARRIVAL AND FIRST CONCERT IN NEW YORK

(1850)

### A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT<sup>1</sup>

September 2, 1850.—The long expectation is over—Jenny Lind has landed on our shores. It was confidently expected yesterday morning that the *Atlantic* would arrive in the course of the day, and crowds collected on all points where a lookout down the bay could be had, eager to catch the first glimpse of her hull in the distance.

Toward 1 o'clock, two guns were heard in the direction of Sandy Hook, and immediately after the signal-flag of a steamer was run up at the telegraph station above Clifton. In a few minutes the *Atlantic* hove in sight, her giant bulk looming through the light mist which still lay on the outer bay. . . . On the top of a light deckhouse, erected over the forward companion-way, sat the subject of the day's excitement—the veritable Jenny Lind—as fresh and rosy as if the sea had spared her its usual discomforts, and enjoying the novel interest of everything she saw, with an apparent unconsciousness of the observation she excited. At her side stood Mr. Jules Benedict, the distinguished composer, and Signor Giovanni Belletti, the celebrated basso, her artistic companion.

<sup>1</sup> As reported in the *New York Tribune*.

---

## JENNY LIND'S ARRIVAL

---

Mr. Barnum,<sup>2</sup> who had by this time climbed on board, with a choice bouquet carefully stuck in the bosom of his white vest, was taken forward and presented by Captain West. But Mr. Collins had for once stolen a march on him, having got on board in advance, and presented to Miss Lind a bouquet about three times the size of Barnum's. The songstress received the latter with great cordiality.

Her manners are very frank and engaging, and there is an expression of habitual good humor in her clear, blue eye, which would win her the heart of a crowd by a single glance. She is about twenty-nine years of age, and rather more robust in face and person than her portraits would indicate. Her forehead is finely formed, shaded by waves of pale brown hair; her eyes, light blue and joyous; her nose and mouth, though molded on the large Swedish type, convey an impression of benevolence and sound goodness of heart, which is thoroughly in keeping with the many stories we have heard of her charitable doings. Mademoiselle Lind was drest with great taste and simplicity. She wore a visite of rich black cashmere over a dress of silver-gray silk, with a pale blue silk hat and black veil. At her feet lay a silky little lap-dog, with ears almost half the length of its body; it was of that rare breed which are worth their weight in gold, and was a present from Queen Victoria. . . .

As soon as Captain West had conducted Mademoiselle Lind to the gangway, the rush commenced. Mademoiselle Ahmansen, with Messrs. Benedict and Belleti, followed, and all four took

<sup>2</sup> P. T. Barnum.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

their seats in the carriage, Mr. Barnum mounting to the driver's place. The crowd inside the gates immediately surrounded the carriage, clinging to the wheels and crowding about the windows, cheering all the while with an enthusiasm we never saw surpassed. The multitude outside began to press against the gates, which were unbolted in all haste to prevent being forced in. Scarcely had one gate been thrown back, however, before the torrent burst in, with an energy frightful to witness. The other half of the gate instantly gave way, the planks snapping like reeds before the pressure. The foremost ranks were forced down upon the floor, and those behind, urged on from without, were piled upon them till a serious loss of life seemed almost inevitable. The spectacle was most alarming; some forty or fifty persons lay crush'd by the inexorable crowd, stretching out their hands and crying for help. Finally, some of the police officers, and some of the gentlemen who happened to be near, succeeded with great difficulty in driving back the crowd and rescuing the sufferers. Many were severely bruised, some came off with bloody noses, and two boys, about twelve years of age, appeared to be seriously injured. Had not the rush been checked in time, many lives would have been lost.

The carriage containing the freight of song was started with difficulty, owing to the enthusiastic crowd around it. Mademoiselle Lind and her cousin, Mademoiselle Ahmansen, occupied the back seat; the former bowed repeatedly as she passed through the gathered thousands. The people fell back respectfully and made way,

---

## JENNY LIND'S ARRIVAL

---

literally heaping the carriage with flowers as she passed along. More than 200 bouquets were thrown into the windows. Once clear of the throng, the carriage was driven off rapidly and succeeded in reaching the Irving House without allowing the people in the streets time to collect. Mademoiselle Lind's elegant suite of apartments in the second story of the hotel were all in readiness, and a couple of police officers crowded the entrance in Chambers Street to prevent the crowd from rushing in. The block around the Irving House was filled with a dense mass of people, with heads upturned, gazing at the different windows, many of which were graced with ladies; but Jenny not among them. At last she appeared at one of the parlor windows opening on Broadway, and there was a general stampede to get sight of her. She bowed repeatedly and kissed her hand in answer to the cheers; her face wore a radiant and delighted expression, and her whole demeanor was winning and graceful.

Her arrival created nearly as much excitement in the Irving House as in the streets. There are at present 530 guests in the house, and each one is anxious to get a glimpse of her. All the passages leading to her apartments are crowded. The great flag of Sweden and Norway was hoisted on the flag-staff of the Irving House immediately upon her arrival. Throughout the evening crowds continued to collect about the hotel, and so incessant were their calls that she was obliged to appear twice again at the windows. Finally, being quite exhausted by the excitement of the day, she retired, and her faithful Swedish servants kept watch to prevent disturbance.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

September 9.—Notwithstanding the pouring rain on Saturday morning, great numbers of people wended their way down Broadway at an early hour, to attend the ticket auction at Castle Garden for the first concert of Jenny Lind. The rain, which came down in torrents sufficient to damp everybody's ardor at the hour of commencing the performances, no doubt deterred a number who would otherwise have entered into the spirit of the scene with ardor. At least 3,000 persons were present, filling the whole body of the Garden, and leaving a goodly number to occupy the balcony. The auctioneer, Mr. Leeds, appeared punctually at the time appointed. Mr. Barnum appeared a few minutes before the bidding commenced, and was greeted by the most tumultuous and enthusiastic applause.

Mr. Leeds now mounted his platform, and made an off-hand statement of the rules and regulations of the day. All the tickets sold must be called for before 12 o'clock on Monday (to-day). All those not applied for at the time specified will be disposed of to the first person applying. The choice of tickets was sold with the privilege of purchasing 1 to 10. No privilege higher than 10 was given.

Now commenced the exciting struggle for the first choice. The first bid was \$20. From this starting point the calls grew louder and more energetic. "Twenty-five"—"thirty"—"thirty-five"—"forty"—"sixty"—"seventy-five"—"eighty"—("Give me the \$100," cried Mr. Leeds), "ninety"—"one hundred" (auctioneer—"I've got it!")—"one hundred and five" ("a very low price! Mr. Leeds")—"one hundred and

---

## JENNY LIND'S ARRIVAL

---

ten"—"twenty-five"—"thirty"—"forty"—"one hundred and fifty"—"one hundred and seventy-five"—"two hundred" (loud cheers)—"two hundred and twenty-five" (\$225). Here there was at last a stop, and curious glances were shot around to discover the fortunate candidate.

"Genin, Hatter," was announced. So the honor of the first purchase is fairly won by Mr. John N. Genin, the well-known hatter, of No. 214 Broadway.<sup>8</sup> The competition for this choice was very spirited, and there were many candidates for the honor. The announcement of the success of Mr. Genin was received with a tremendous outburst of applause.

The bidding then proceeded with considerable rapidity, and in comparative quietness, tho there were still abundant tokens of enthusiasm. The second choice of seats sold for \$25. The third brought \$15. The stage box on the left (four seats, at \$35 each) was sold to the New York Hotel for \$140. The remaining box has been reserved for Mademoiselle Lind herself. Several single chairs near the stage were sold at \$8.50 each, and a number at \$8. The next seats offered were in the front row of the balcony, which brought \$5 to \$9.50 each. The front bench seats below, in the rear of the chairs, brought \$7, \$6.50 and \$5 each. The second row brought about the same. The bidding for the second row of the balcony was finished about 2 P.M.; the prices ranged from \$7.50 to \$5.

Upward of 1,400 seats were disposed of by 3

<sup>8</sup>Genin's venture has always been regarded as an extremely clever advertising investment.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

o'clock, and the sale was adjourned till Monday, since it became necessary to clear the house for the operatic performance of the evening. The 1,400 seats were disposed of at an average of nearly \$6.50 per seat. As the sale proceeds, it is likely that this average will be reduced, but probably not below \$5. At this rate Jenny Lind's first concert in America will realize for the manager about \$30,000.

September 12.—Jenny Lind's first concert is over, and all doubts are at an end. She is the greatest singer we have ever heard, and her success is all that was anticipated from her genius and her fame. All the preparatory arrangements for the concert were made with great care, and from an admirable system observed none of the usual disagreeable features of such an event were experienced. Outside of the gate there was a double row of policemen extending up the main avenue of the Battery grounds.<sup>4</sup> Carriages only were permitted to drive up to the gate from the Whitehall side, and pass over into Battery Place. At one time the line of carriages extended to Whitehall and up State Street into Broadway. The chief of police with about sixty men came on the ground at five o'clock, and maintained the most complete order to the end. Mr. Barnum, according to promise, had put up a substantial framework, and thrown an immense awning over the bridge, which is some 200 feet in length. This was brilliantly lighted, and had almost the appearance of a triumphal avenue on entering the gate. There was an immense crowd on the Bat-

<sup>4</sup>The opera-house of that day was Castle Garden, now the Aquarium. Originally it was known as Castle Williams.

---

## JENNY LIND'S ARRIVAL

---

try clustering around the gates during the whole evening, but no acts of disorder occurred. When Jenny Lind's carriage came, but very few persons knew it, and no great excitement followed.

The principal annoyance was occasioned by a noisy crowd of boys in boats, who gathered around the outer wall of the Castle, and, being by their position secure from the police, tried to disturb those within by a hideous clamor of shouts and yells, accompanied by a discordant din of drums and fifes. There must have been more than 200 boats and 1,000 persons on the water. They caused some annoyance to that portion of the audience in the back seats of the balcony, but the nuisance was felt by none in the parquette. By 10 o'clock they had either become tired or ashamed of the contemptible outrage they were attempting, and dispersed.

On entering the Castle, a company of ushers, distinguished by their badges, were in readiness to direct the visitor to that part of the hall where their seats were located. Colored lamps and hangings suspended to the pillars indicated at a glance the different divisions, and the task of seating the whole audience of near 7,000 persons was thus accomplished without the least inconvenience. The hall was brilliantly lighted, tho from its vast extent the stage looked somewhat dim. The wooden partition which was built up in place of the drop curtain is covered with a painting representing the combined standards of America and Sweden, below which are arabesque ornaments in white and gold. Considering the short time allowed for these improvements, the change was remarkable. The only instance of

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

bad taste which we noticed was a large motto, worked in flowers, suspended over the pillars of the balcony, directly in front of the stage. "Welcome, Sweet Warbler" (so ran the words) was not only tame and commonplace, but out of place.

The sight of the grand hall, with its gay decorations, its glittering lamps, and its vast throng of expectant auditors, was in itself almost worth a \$5 ticket. We were surprised to notice that not more than one-eighth of the audience were ladies. They must stay at home, it seems, when the tickets are high, but the gentlemen go, nevertheless. For its size, the audience was one of the most quiet, refined and appreciative we ever saw assembled in this city. . . .

Now came a moment of breathless expectation. A moment more, and Jenny Lind, clad in a white dress which well became the frank sincerity of her face, came forward through the orchestra. It is impossible to describe the spontaneous burst of welcome which greeted her. The vast assembly rose as one man, and for some minutes nothing could be seen but the waving of hands and handkerchiefs, nothing heard but a storm of tumultuous cheers. The enthusiasm of the moment, for a time beyond all bounds, was at last subdued, after prolonging itself by its own fruitless efforts to subdue itself, and the divine songstress, with that perfect bearing, that air of a dignity and sweetness, blending a childlike simplicity and half-trembling womanly modesty with the beautiful confidence of genius and serene wisdom of art, address herself to song, as the orchestral symphony prepared the way for the voice in "Casta Diva."

---

## JENNY LIND'S ARRIVAL

---

A better test piece could not have been selected for her début. Every soprano lady has sung it to us; but nearly every one has seemed only trying to make something of it, while Jenny Lind *was* the very music of it for the time being. We would say no less than that; for the wisest and honestest part of criticism on such a first hearing of a thing so perfect, was to give itself purely up to it, without question, and attempt no analysis of what too truly fills one to have yet begun to be an object of thought.

If it were possible, we would describe the quality of that voice, so pure, so sweet, so fine, so whole and all-pervading, in its lowest breathings a miniature *fioriture* as well as in its strongest volume. We never heard tones which in their sweetness went so far. They brought the most distant and ill-seated auditor close to her. They were tones, every one of them, and the whole air had to take the law of their vibrations. The voice and the delivery had in them all the good qualities of all the good singers. Song in her has that integral beauty which at once proclaims it as a type for all, and is most naturally worshiped as such by the multitude. . . .

Her voice is a genuine soprano, reaching the extra high notes with that ease and certainty which make each highest one a triumph of expression purely, and not a physical marvel. The gradual growth and *sostenuto* of her tones; the light and shade, rhythmic undulation and balance of her passages; the birdlike ecstasy of her trill; faultless precision and fluency of her chromatic scales; above all, the sure reservation of such volume of voice as to crown each protracted climax with

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

glory, not needing a new effort to raise force for the final blow; and indeed all the points one looks for in a mistress of the vocal art, were eminently hers in "Casta Diva," but the charm lay not in any *point*, but rather in the inspired vitality, the hearty, genuine outpouring of the whole—the real and yet truly ideal humanity of all her singing. That is what has won the world to Jenny Lind; it is that her whole soul and being goes out in her song, and that her voice becomes the impersonation of that song's soul if it have any, that is, if it be a song. There is plainly no vanity in her, no aim to effect; it is all frank and real and harmoniously earnest. . . .

At the close, the audience (who made no movement to leave till the last note had been uttered), broke out in a tempest of cheers, only less vehement than those which welcomed her in "Casta Diva." She came forward again, bowed with a bright, grateful face, and retired. The cheers were now mingled with shouts of "Barnum," who at last came forward, and with some difficulty obtained sufficient order to speak. "My friends," said he, "you have often heard it asked, 'Where's Barnum?'" Amid the cheers and laughter which followed this, we could only catch the words: "Henceforth, you may say, 'Barnum's nowhere!'"

Mr. Barnum, after expressing his gratification at the splendid welcome which had been given Mademoiselle Lind, stated that he would disclose a piece of news which he could no longer keep secret, and which would show how well that welcome was deserved. Mademoiselle Lind on Monday morning informed him that it was her inten-

---

## JENNY LIND'S ARRIVAL

---

tion to give her share of the net proceeds of the present concert, amounting to considerably more than \$10,000, to the various charities of this city. This announcement was the signal for another storm. We did not count the number of cheers given, but we never witnessed such a pitch of enthusiasm. Mr. Barnum then proceeded to read the list of her donations, interrupted at every name by a fresh burst of applause:

To the Fire Department Fund, \$3,000; Musical Fund Society, \$2,000; Home for the Friendless, \$500; Society for the Relief of Indigent Females, \$500; Dramatic Fund Association, \$500; Home for Colored and Aged Persons, \$500; Colored and Orphan Association, \$500; Lying-in Asylum for Destitute Females, \$500; Protestant Half-orphan Asylum, \$500; Roman Catholic Half-orphan Asylum, \$500; total, \$10,000.

In case the money coming to her shall exceed this sum, she will hereafter designate the charity to which it is to be appropriated. Mr. Barnum was then about to retire, when there was a universal call for Jenny Lind. The songstress, however, had already taken her departure, and the excited crowd, after giving a few more cheers, followed her example, and slowly surged out of the Castle door, and down the canopied bridge, in a glow of good humor and admiration. A few disorderly vagrants collected on the bridges leading to the bath-houses hooted at the throng as it passed out, but everybody went home quietly, with a new joy at his heart, and a new thought in his brain.

## THE PUBLICATION OF "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN"

(1852)

BY HARRIET BEECHER STOWE<sup>1</sup>

The author had for many years lived in Ohio on the confines of a slave State, and had thus been made familiar with facts and occurrences in relation to the institution of American slavery. Some of the most harrowing incidents related in the story had from time to time come to her knowledge in conversation with former slaves now free in Ohio. The cruel sale and separation of a married woman from her husband, narrated in Chapter XII, "Select Incident of Lawful Trade," had passed under her own eye while a passenger on a steamboat on the Ohio River. Her husband and brother had once been obliged to flee with a fugitive slave woman by night, as described in Chapter IX; and she herself had been called to write the letters for a former slave woman, servant in her own family, to a slave husband in Kentucky, who, trusted with unlimited liberty, free to come and go on business between Kentucky and Ohio, still refused to break his pledge of honor to his master, tho that master

<sup>1</sup>From Mrs. Stowe's Introduction to a new Edition of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." By permission of and by arrangement with, the authorized publishers, Houghton, Mifflin Company. Copyright, 1879.

---

## **"UNCLE TOM'S CABIN"**

---

from year to year deferred the keeping of his promise of freedom to the slave. It was the simple honor and loyalty of this Christian black man, who remained in slavery rather than violate a trust, that first imprest her with the possibility of such a character as, years after, was delineated in Uncle Tom.

From time to time incidents were brought to her knowledge which deepened her horror of slavery. But it was not for many years that she felt any call to make use of the materials thus accumulating. In fact, it was a sort of general impression upon her mind, as upon that of many humane people in those days, that the subject was so dark and painful a one, so involved in difficulty and obscurity, so utterly beyond human hope or help, that it was of no use to read or think or distress one's self about it. There was a class of profest Abolitionists in Cincinnati and the neighboring regions, but they were unfashionable persons and few in number. Like all asserters of pure abstract right as applied to human affairs, they were regarded as a species of moral monomaniacs, who, in the consideration of one class of interests and wrongs, had lost sight of all proportion and all good judgment. Both in church and in State they were looked upon as "those that troubled Israel."

It was a general saying among conservative and sagacious people that this subject was a dangerous one to investigate, and that nobody could begin to read and think upon it without becoming practically insane; moreover, that it was a subject of such delicacy that no discussion of it could be held in the free States without im-

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

pinging upon the sensibilities of the slave States, to whom alone the management of the matter belonged.

So when Dr. Bailey—a wise, temperate, and just man, a model of courtesy in speech and writing—came to Cincinnati and set up an anti-slavery paper, proposing a fair discussion of the subject, there was an immediate excitement. On two occasions a mob led by slaveholders from Kentucky attacked his office, destroying his printing-press, and threw his types into the Ohio River. The most of the Cincinnati respectability, in Church and State, contented themselves on this occasion with reprobating the imprudence of Dr. Bailey in thus “arousing the passions of our fellow citizens of Kentucky.” In these mobs and riots the free colored people were threatened, maltreated, abused, and often had to flee for their lives. Even the servants of good families were often chased to the very houses of their employers, who rescued them with difficulty; and the story was current in those days of a brave little woman who defended her black waiter, standing, pistol in hand, on her own doorstep, and telling the mob face to face that they should not enter except over her dead body.

Professor Stowe's<sup>2</sup> house was more than once a refuge for frightened fugitives on whom the very terrors of death had fallen; and the inmates slept with arms in the house and a large bell ready to call the young men of the adjoining institution, in case the mob should come up to search the house. Nor was this a vain or improbable suggestion; for the mob, in their fury, had more

<sup>2</sup> Calvin E. Stowe, the author's husband.

---

## **"UNCLE TOM'S CABIN"**

---

than once threatened to go up and set fire to Lane Seminary, where a large body of students were known to be Abolitionists. Only the fact that the institution was two miles from the city, with a rough and muddy road up a long, high hill, proved its salvation. Cincinnati mud, far known for its depth and tenacity, had sometimes its advantages.

After many years' residence in Ohio, Mrs. Stowe returned to make her abode in New England, just in the height of the excitement produced by the Fugitive Slave Law. Settled in Brunswick, Me., she was in constant communication with friends in Boston, who wrote to her from day to day of the terror and despair which that law had occasioned to industrious, worthy colored people who had from time to time escaped to Boston, and were living in peace and security. She heard of families broken up and fleeing in the dead of winter to the frozen shores of Canada. But what seemed to her more inexplicable, more dreadful, was the apparent apathy of the Christian world of the free North to these proceedings. The pulpits that denounced them were exceptions, the voices raised to remonstrate few and far between.

In New England, as at the West, profest Abolitionists were a small, despised, unfashionable band, whose constant remonstrances from year to year had been disregarded as the voices from impracticable fanatics. It seemed now as if the system once confined to the Southern States was rousing itself to new efforts to extend itself all over the North, and to overgrow the institutions of free society.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

With astonishment and distress Mrs. Stowe heard on all sides, from humane and Christian people, that the slavery of the blacks was a guaranteed constitutional right, and that all opposition to it endangered the national Union. With this conviction she saw that even earnest and tender-hearted Christian people seemed to feel it a duty to close their eyes, ears, and hearts to the harrowing details of slavery, to put down all discussion of the subject, and even to assist slave-owners to recover fugitives in Northern States. She said to herself, These people can not know what slavery is: they do not see what they are defending; and hence arose a purpose to write some sketches which should show to the world slavery as she had herself seen it. Pondering this subject, she was one day turning over a little bound volume of an anti-slavery magazine, edited by Mrs. Dr. Bailey, of Washington, and there she read the account of the escape of a woman with her child on the ice of the Ohio River from Kentucky. The incident was given by an eye-witness, one who had helped the woman to the Ohio shore. This formed the first salient point of the story. She began to meditate. The faithful slave husband in Kentucky occurred to her as a pattern of Uncle Tom, and the scenes of the story began gradually to form themselves in her mind.

The first part of the book ever committed to writing was the death of Uncle Tom. This scene presented itself almost as a tangible vision to her mind while sitting at the communion-table in the little church in Brunswick. She was perfectly overcome by it, and could scarcely restrain

---

## “UNCLE TOM'S CABIN”

---

the convulsion of tears and sobs that shook her frame. She hastened home, and wrote it; and, her husband being away, she read it to her two sons of ten and twelve years of age. The little fellows broke out into convulsions of weeping, one of them saying, through his sobs, “O mamma, slavery is the most curst thing in the world!”

From that time the story can less be said to have been composed by her than imposed upon her. Scenes, incidents, conversations, rushed upon her with a vividness and importunity that would not be denied. The book insisted upon getting itself into being, and would take no denial. After the first two or three chapters were written, she wrote to Dr. Bailey of the *National Era* that she was planning a story that might probably run through several numbers of the *Era*. In reply she received an instant application for it, and began immediately to send off weekly instalments. She was then in the midst of heavy domestic cares, with a young infant, with a party of pupils in her family, to whom she was imparting daily lessons with her own children, and with untrained servants requiring constant supervision; but the story was so much more intense a reality to her than any other earthly thing that the weekly instalment never failed. It was there in her mind day and night waiting to be written, and requiring but a few moments to bring it into visible characters. The weekly number was always read to the family circle before it was sent away, and all the household kept up an intense interest in the progress of the story.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

As the narrative appeared in the *Era*, sympathetic words began to come to her from old workers who had long been struggling in the anti-slavery cause. She visited Boston, went to the Anti-slavery Rooms, and reenforced her repertoire of facts by such documents as Theodore D. Weld's "Slavery As It Is," the Lives of Josiah Henson and Lewis Clarke, particulars whose lives were inwoven with the story in the characters of Uncle Tom and George Harris.

In shaping her material, the author had but one purpose, to show the institution of slavery truly, just as it existed. She had visited in Kentucky, had formed the acquaintance of people who were just, upright, and generous, and yet slaveholders. She had heard their views, and appreciated their situation. She felt that justice required that their difficulties should be recognized and their virtues acknowledged. It was her object to show that the evils of slavery were the inherent evils of a bad system, and not always the fault of those who had become involved in it and were its actual administrators.

Then she was convinced that the presentation of slavery alone, in its most dreadful forms, would be a picture of such unrelieved horror and darkness as nobody could be induced to look at. Of set purpose, she sought to light up the darkness by humorous and grotesque episodes and presentation of the amusing phases of slavery, for which her recollection of the never-failing wit and drollery of her former colored friends in Ohio gave her abundant material.

As the story progest, a young publisher, J. P. Jewett, of Boston, set his eye upon it, and

---

## “UNCLE TOM’S CABIN”

---

made overtures for the publication of it in book form, to which she consented. After a while she had a letter from him expressing his fears that she was making the story too long for a one-volume publication. He reminded her that it was an unpopular subject, and that people would not willingly hear much about it: that one short volume might possibly sell, but, if it grew to two, it might prove a fatal obstacle to its success. Mrs. Stowe replied that she did not make the story, that the story made itself, and that she could not stop it till it was done. The feeling that pursued her increased in intensity to the last, till, with the death of Uncle Tom, it seemed as if the whole vital force had left her. A feeling of profound discouragement came over her. Would anybody read it? Would anybody listen? Would this appeal, into which she had put heart, soul, mind, and strength, which she had written with her heart’s blood—would it, too, go for nothing, as so many prayers and groans and treaties of these poor suffering souls had gone?

It was when the last proof-sheet had been sent to the office that Mrs. Stowe, alone and thoughtful, sat reading Horace Mann’s eloquent plea for those young men and women, then about to be consigned to the slave warehouse of Bruin & Hill in Alexandria—a plea eloquent, impassioned, but vain, as all other pleas on that side had ever proved in all courts hitherto. It seemed to her that there was no hope, that nobody would hear, nobody would read, nobody would pity; that this frightful system, which had already pursued its victims into the free States, might at last even threaten them in Canada.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

“Uncle Tom’s Cabin” was published March 20, 1852. The despondency of the author as to the question whether anybody would read or attend to her appeal was soon dispelled. Ten thousand copies were sold in a few days, and over 300,000 within a year; and eight power-presses, running day and night, were barely able to keep pace with the demand for it. It was read everywhere, apparently, and by everybody; and she soon began to hear echoes of sympathy all over the land. The indignation, the pity, the distress that had long weighed upon her soul, seemed to pass off from her and into the readers of the book.

A more cheering result was in the testimony of many colored persons and fugitive slaves who said to her: “Since that book has come out, everybody is good to us: we find friends everywhere. It’s wonderful how kind everybody is.”

In one respect, Mrs. Stowe’s expectations were strikingly different from fact. She had painted slaveholders as amiable, generous, and just. She had shown examples among them of the noblest and most beautiful traits of character, had admitted fully their temptations, their perplexities, and their difficulties, so that a friend of hers who had many relatives in the South wrote to her in exultation, “Your book is going to be the great pacifier: it will unite both North and South.” Her expectation was that the profest Abolitionists would denounce it as altogether too mild in its dealings with slaveholders. To her astonishment, it was the extreme Abolitionists who received it, and the entire South who rose up against it.

## THE OPENING OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE IN NEW YORK

(1853)

### A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT<sup>1</sup>

The Crystal Palace is opened! The great event on which so many hopes, expectations, and anxieties were clustered, is at last completed. No event, for a long time, has created so general and so profound an interest in the public mind. The whole city was alive yesterday with the interest and excitement which the event occasioned. Throngs of spectators were eager to catch a glimpse of the grand procession by which the President of the United States was to be escorted to the palace. An immense tide of travel moved toward the building during the whole forenoon. Sixth Avenue cars ran once a minute, each crowded to its utmost capacity. Stages running to the vicinity of the building were also densely filled.

At an early hour, the Palace was besieged by applicants for admission. Stern officials guarded the entrances, and informed all who came, that until 10 o'clock none but exhibitors

<sup>1</sup> As reported in the *New York Times* of July 15, 1858. The Crystal Palace was erected on ground now in part occupied by the New York Public Library, at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, and extended westward into what is now Bryant Park. It was modeled after the building of the same name first erected in Hyde Park, London, for the World's

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

would be admitted. At 10, however, the jealous gates unclosed, and red, yellow, white, and blue invitations poured in at the different entrances. The throng, even then, was excessive. The omnibuses, cars, hackney coaches, all poured forth their live freight at Forty-second Street, and ladies and gentlemen, at every degree of temperature, ascended the stairs that led to the interior. Foreigners, we observed, distinguished themselves much. French gentlemen, invested in magical waistcoats, would persist in delivering their red cards of admission where only blue were admitted, and we observed numbers of very energetic Germans who wanted to go in everywhere. There was, seemingly, however, a large amount of happiness diffused over every one's face. New dresses were displayed—husbands were attentive, and there seemed to be a universal determination to be joyful, which was, as far as we could see, carried out to the very letter.

The interior of the palace was even more imposing than we could have anticipated. The change wrought in it since the night before seemed a miracle. Everything was neat and orderly. The floors were thoroughly swept, much of the contributions were displayed, among which Thorwaldsen's noble series of "Christ and His Apostles," in the Danish section, attracted much deserved attention. Bright banners flaunted from the galleries, suits of old armor, from the

Fair in 1851, and afterward removed to Sydenham, a suburb of London, in which place it still stands. The London building is 1608 feet long with a transept 390 by 125 feet. The building in New York was much smaller. Its destruction by fire in 1858 was an event of much note in the annals of the city.

---

## OPENING OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE

---

Tower of London, frowned grimly on the scene, as if the spirit of antiquity was wroth within them at the contrast between our days, bright with intellectual progress, and those good, old benighted times in which they saw service. And over all, the great dome stretched its painted canopy, joining together the diverging naves, as the building itself drew together widely differing nations.

The palace filled rapidly. At the intersections of the naves, and all beneath the dome, the floor was soon parti-colored as a garden with brilliant bonnets and silks, and young ladies who were afraid of being too enthusiastic, lest they should be laughed at, walked wonderingly about. The platform in the north nave, which was to be the great scene of interest for the day, began about this time to be animated. Members of the Senate, guests invited by special request, martial officers, looking anything but easy in their uniforms, and the president of the Crystal Palace with his official staff, and a host of other persons too distinguished to be well known, made their appearance on the boards. The Press, too, took possession of its table at the base of Washington's statue, and nibbed its pens, and arranged its note-books with great solemnity.

It was already 1 o'clock, and the President,<sup>\*</sup> without whom nothing could go on, had not arrived. Watches innumerable were pulled out on the platform. Mr. Sedgwick looked grave. His staff looked still more grave, and among all outside barbarians who were not on the platform,

\* Franklin Pierce.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

there was a great craning of heads over other people's shoulders, to see if they could not catch a glimpse of the Chief Magistrate. But he came not—and people took to wandering once more through the galleries and naves. Presently there was a stir and a hum, and the people surged to and fro, and all that could run, ran, and arrived in time to see a tall, soldierly, and not ungraceful gentleman cross the platform. A loud clapping of hands greeted the Hero of Chippewa.<sup>8</sup> Then some more celebrities mounted the stage unrecognized by any popular demonstration. The time wore rapidly on, diversified by a slight panic on the stage, created by the breaking of a pane of glass in the dome, and the fall of some of the fragments, until, at length, the sound of trumpets was caught up in the distance, and then everybody settled themselves firmly in their places or sought new ones, or strove to regain their old—for it was announced that the President had come.

At this moment the scene presented from the gallery by the crowd upon the floor below was one of unequaled brilliancy. The whole space under the dome, extending nearly to the end of each nave, was densely filled by the eager mass. Ladies in great numbers, many of them exceedingly handsome, and all gaily drest, filled the benches, sat upon the stairs, or stood anxiously looking over the gallery railing. Here and there, scattered through the mass, rose the tall plumes

<sup>8</sup> General Winfield Scott, who, in November, 1852, had been the unsuccessful Whig candidate for President, Franklin Pierce being elected. The two candidates were now on the same platform.

---

## OPENING OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE

---

of the military, adding variety and brilliancy to a scene already gay with many colors. The platform set apart for the reception of President Pierce was erected in the north nave of the palace, toward the center of the building; and on it were ranged seats for over 700 persons. . .

The honor of originating an international exhibition has been very generally awarded by the English people to Prince Albert; that people, in their loyalty, are always glad of an opportunity to decorate the brows of their rulers; but in reality, the thought of an industrial exposition of the industries of all nations took its rise almost simultaneously in the minds of several English gentlemen, among whom were Digby Wyatt and S. C. Hall, the editor and proprietor of the *London Art Journal*. However disposed one may be to cavil at a prince's undue honors, one must yield to Prince Albert all praise for the heartiness and alacrity with which he entered into the undertaking. In England, royal patronage is all that is required to make anything successful. It no sooner became known that the "highest personage in the land" was interesting herself in the scheme of an international exhibition, than support came from all quarters.

The grandeur of the conception was immediately recognized on all sides; and that which, if presented by a private individual, would have been sneered down as chimerical and impossible, became, in the hands of a royal sponsor, not only feasible, but sublime. Meanwhile, the great work went on. Sir Joseph, then plain Mr. Paxton, greenhouse architect to his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, having, from constant association

---

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

with conservatories, a natural taste for glass houses, conceived the happy idea of a crystal palace. So late in the field, as all the other architects had long since sent in plans for a suitable building in which to hold the exhibition, he betook himself to the realization of his idea with wonderful energy; completed his plans in an incredibly short space of time, and forwarded them to the Committee of Judgment. The novelty of the idea, the beauty of the proposed structure, its many advantages over erections of solid materials, at once overwhelmed any scruples which so bold a conception might have otherwise generated, and Mr. Paxton was declared the successful competitor.

The details of his plan were no sooner made public than all the distrust of novelty, so peculiar to the English character, broke out in full force. The press, while acknowledging the boldness of the conception, took occasion to predict its utter failure. Architectural publications entered into elaborate calculations, to prove that such a building was not capable of sustaining its own weight. Nervous ladies declared that they would never enter so unstable a structure, and rival architects wrote savage letters to the *Times*, denouncing Mr. Paxton as a humbug, and the Crystal Palace as a huge trap in which unwary citizens on the day of opening would be caught.

Undeterred by these assaults, Mr. Paxton went steadily on, and soon the calm waters of the Serpentine reflected columns, derricks, girders, and all the other paraphernalia of builders. Having exhausted themselves in attacking the stability of the building, critics turned to its decora-

---

## OPENING OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE

---

tions. These had been entrusted to Mr. Owen Jones, a gentleman of great skill, who devoted much time and labor to chromatic decorations. When the public saw Mr. Jones painting the iron-work of the palace in patches of bright blue and red, varied with white, orange, and black, they declared that the building was about to be reduced to a vulgar show, painted in glaring colors. When the whole was complete, however, they saw how those hues, blended into one another, produced a soft and varied effect that pleased without tiring the eye.

On the 1st of May, 1851, all objections were answered, all evil predictions confuted, all invective silenced, when the solemn opening of the Crystal Palace was effected by her Majesty Queen Victoria in person. The writer was present on that memorable occasion. The pageant which he beheld will not easily be forgotten. Twenty-five thousand men and women had assembled to witness the ceremony. The vast building, covering eleven acres of ground, was thronged, the crowd for the most part silent, and duly impress with the solemnity of the occasion. When some ruffian from without flung a stone on the roof, and the noise of its rebounds echoed like thunder through the huge hall, the great tide of human life gave one sudden surge of fear. Every one thought of the mournful prognostications that the building would fall; but the panic lasted only a moment. Then the organ pealed out its grand devotional music, which flowed like a mighty river through the long halls, and the Queen walked confidently among her subjects.

## THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL

(1854)

BY EDWARD A. POLLARD<sup>1</sup>

The wisest statesmen of America were convinced that the true and intelligent means of continuing the Union was to preserve the sectional equilibrium, and to keep a balance of power between North and South. That equilibrium had been violently disturbed, in 1820, at the time of the Missouri Compromise. The relative representations of the North and South in the United States Senate were then so evenly balanced that it came to be decisive of a continuance of political power in the South whether Missouri should be an addition to her ranks or to those of her adversary. The contest ended, immediately, in favor of the South; but not without involving a measure of proscription against slavery.

Another struggle for political power between the two sections occurred on the admission of Texas. The South gained another State. But the acquisition of Texas brought on the war

<sup>1</sup> From Pollard's "Lost Cause." The author was long editor of the *Richmond Examiner*, including the period of the Civil War. He was born in Virginia in 1828, and died in Lynchburg in 1872. His "Lost Cause," published in 1866, was the earliest noteworthy book on the Civil War published by a Southern writer.

The act passed by Congress in 1854 providing for the

---

## THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL

---

with Mexico; and an enormous addition to Northern territory became rapidly peopled with a population allured from every quarter of the globe.

On the admission of California into the Union, the South was persuaded to let her come in with an anti-slavery Constitution for the wretched compensation of a reenactment of the fugitive-slave law, and some other paltry measures. The cry was raised that the Union was in danger. The appeals urged under this cry had the usual effect of reconciling the South to the sacrifice required of her, and embarrassed anything like resistance on the part of her representatives in Congress to the compromise measures of 1850. South Carolina threatened secession; but the other Southern States were not prepared to respond to the bold and adventurous initiative of Southern independence. But it should be stated that the other States of the South, in agreeing to what was called, in severe irony, the Compromise of 1850, declared that it was the last concession they would make to the North; that they took it as a "finality," and that the slavery question was thereafter to be excluded from the pale of Federal discussion.

In 1852 Franklin Pierce was elected President organization of Kansas and Nebraska as territories introduced the principle of what is known as "Squatter Sovereignty," or local option as to slavery within the territory. It was in effect a repeal of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and had a powerful influence in promoting the rise of the Republican party organized soon afterward. The principle of "Squatter Sovereignty" was advocated and chiefly promoted by Stephen A. Douglas, who became afterward the great rival of Lincoln for Senator from Illinois.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

of the United States. He was a favorite of the State Rights Democracy of the South; and it was hoped that under his administration the compromise measures of 1850 would indeed be realized as a “finality,” and the country be put upon a career of constitutional and peaceful rule. But a new and violent agitation was to spring up in the first session of the first Congress under his administration.

The Territory of Nebraska had applied for admission into the Union. Mr. Stephen A. Douglas, Senator from Illinois, reported from the Committee on Territories a bill which made two Territories—Nebraska and Kansas—instead of one, and which declared that the Missouri Compromise Act was superseded by the compromise measures of 1850, and had thus become inoperative. It held that the Missouri Compromise Act, “being inconsistent with the principles of *non-intervention by Congress with slavery* in the States and Territories as recognized by the legislation of 1850, commonly called the Compromise Measures, is hereby declared inoperative and void; it being the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave *the people thereof* perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions, subject only to the Constitution of the United States.” The bill passed both houses of Congress in 1854.

The Kansas-Nebraska bill, involving as it did the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, was taken by the South as a sort of triumph. The latter measure, being viewed as an act of proscription against the South, was justly offensive to her;

---

## THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL

---

altho indeed the repeal was scarcely more than a matter of principle or sentiment, as the sagacious statesmen of the South were well aware that the States in the Northwest were likely, from the force of circumstances, to be settled by Northern people, and to be thus dedicated to their institutions. But it was then supposed that the phraseology of the Kansas-Nebraska bill was not liable to misconstruction; and that when it was declared that the people of the Territories were to determine the question of slavery, it meant, of course, that they were to do so in the act of forming a State Constitution and deciding upon other institutions of the State as well as that of slavery.

In the North, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was the occasion of a furious excitement. Mr. Douglas was hung in effigy in some of their towns, execrated by Northern mobs, and even threatened with violence to his person. The anti-slavery sentiment of the North was rapidly developed in the excitement; a new party was organized with reference to the question of slavery in the Territories; and thus originated the famous Republican party—popularly called the Black Republican party—which was indeed identical with the Abolition party in its sentiment of hostility to slavery, and differed from it only as to the degree of indirection by which its purpose might best be accomplished. This party comprised the great mass of the intellect and wealth of the North. It was also the Protectionist party. Its leaning was in favor of strong government, and whatever there might be of aristocracy in the North belonged to it.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

The new party sprung at once into an amazing power. In the Presidential canvass of 1852, which had resulted in the election of Mr. Pierce, John P. Hale, who ran upon what was called the "straight-out" Abolition ticket, did not receive the vote of a single State, and but 175,296 of the popular vote of the Union. But upon the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, Abolitionism, in the guise of "Republicanism," swept almost everything before it in the North and Northwest in the elections of 1854 and 1855; and in the Thirty-first Congress, Nathaniel Banks, an objectionable Abolitionist of the Massachusetts school, was elected to the speakership of the House.

In the meantime, the language of the Kansas-Nebraska bill was the subject of no dispute. No one supposed that from this language there was to originate an *afterthought* on the part of Mr. Douglas, and that, by an ingenious torture of words, this measure was to be converted into one to conciliate the anti-slavery sentiment of the North, and to betray the interests of the South. This afterthought was doubtless the consequence of the rapid growth of the Black Republican party, and the conviction that the Democratic party in the North would only recover its power by some marked concession to the sectional sentiment now rapidly developing on the subject of slavery.

It should be noticed here that the doctrine of "non-intervention," which prohibited Congress from interfering with the question of slavery in the Territories, had been affirmed by a judicial decision in the Supreme Court of the

---

## THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL

---

United States. In the famous "Dred Scott case," a negro demanded his freedom on the ground of legal residence beyond the latitude of 36° 30' North—the line of the Missouri Compromise. The Supreme Court pronounced that Congress had no power to make that law; that it was therefore null and void; and declared "that the Constitution recognizes the right of property in a slave, and makes no distinction between that description of property and other property owned by a citizen;" and further, that every citizen had the clear right to go into any Territory, and take with him that which the Constitution recognized as his property.

So far the rights of the South in the Territories were thought to be plain; the design of the Black Republican party to exclude slavery therefrom by the Federal authority had been pronounced unconstitutional by the highest judicial authority in the country; and the Kansas-Nebraska bill was thought to be a plain letter, which taught that slavery was the subject of exclusive legislation by States, or by Territories in the act of assuming the character of States. But the South only stood on the threshold of a new controversy—another exhibition of the ingenuity of the anti-slavery sentiment to assert itself in new methods and on new issues.

# THE COMPLETION RAILROAD TO

(1)

BY WILLIAM D.

In looking for the origin of the Ohio Railroad, we are led back to the year 1826. At about that time, the Western people aroused in Baltimore to the fact that the New York had diverted a large portion of the trade of the West. It is a well-known fact that the steamboat plowed the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and even a stage route was established between New Orleans and the Ohio or Mississippi. The Western people and traffic had market for their products in Cincinnati and beyond. This trade became an important source of wealth and prosperity, and were turned by the loss of the Ohio River, which she lost the greater portion of her trade, which Philadelphia appropriated.

In 1826, Philip E. Cooke, a Quaker merchant philosopher, founded the Mechanics Bank of Baltimore.

<sup>1</sup> From Smith's "Book of American Commerce" of 1857."

## A RAILROAD TO THE MISSISSIPPI

ned for the transportation of passengers on 22d of May, 1830, being but a little more than teen months from the commencement of the k upon it; but the preparation of the necessary cars was not effected until the early part of the following, from which time the traveling on division, extending to Ellicott's Mills, con- duced constant and uninterrupted, horse and le power being used for drawing the cars. omotives at this period were in their infancy, until the opening of the Liverpool and Man- ster Railroad during this same year, the ut- est speed in travel obtained by locomotives did exceed six miles an hour; the question, in- d, had not then been decided as to what kind motive power would prove most advantageous. During the first few months after the road was ed, the people of Baltimore continued to ong to the depot, to try this novel mode of vel; and Ellicott's Mills became as familiar them as if within the corporate limits of the y. The number of cars was, however, very lited, and but one track was completed, notwithstanding which, the receipts up to the first October, four months from the time of putting cars on, amounted to \$20,012.36. The mer- andise and produce offered was ten times more an could be conveyed with all the means of nsportation in possession of the company. The ltimore and Ohio Railroad, being the first road operation in the country, and almost in the rld, for the transportation of passengers and andise, of course attracted visitors from t every section of the United States, as well m some parts of Europe. . . .

# THE COMPLETION OF THE FIRST RAILROAD TO THE MISSISSIPPI

(1857)

BY WILLIAM PRESCOTT SMITH<sup>1</sup>

In looking for the origin of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, we are carried back as far as the year 1826. At about that period attention was aroused in Baltimore to the fact that the public works of Pennsylvania and the Erie Canal of New York had diverted from Baltimore a large portion of the trade she had built up with the West. It is a well-known fact that long before the steamboat plowed its wake across Lake Erie, or even a stage route existed between Buffalo and the Ohio or Mississippi valleys, emigration and traffic had marked a path across the mountains from Philadelphia and Baltimore to Cincinnati and beyond. To Baltimore, especially, this trade became an important element of prosperity and wealth; but when the Alleghanies were turned by the long circuit of the Lake Shore she lost the greater portion of that commerce, which Philadelphia and New York found and appropriated.

In 1826, Philip E. Thomas, an intelligent Quaker merchant philanthropist, president of the Mechanics Bank of Baltimore, and George Brown

<sup>1</sup> From Smith's "Book of the Great Railway Celebration of 1857."

## A RAILROAD TO THE MISSISSIPPI

---

son of the distinguished merchant Alexander Brown—a director in the same institution, took up the subject for careful consideration. The result of their conferences and deliberations was the conviction that, unless early and adequate means could be devised to recover this trade, it would be ultimately lost to their city forever.

Previous to this time no railroad had been constructed either in Europe or America for the conveyance of passengers, produce, or merchandise between distant points. A few railroads had been constructed in England for local purposes, such as the transportation of coal, iron, and other heavy articles from the mines or places of production to navigable waters; but for general purposes of travel and trade they were still an untried experiment, and so crude was public information on the subject, that the question had not been settled whether stationary steam-engines or horses would be preferable as the motive power. . . .

The construction of the road was commenced on the 4th of July, 1828, accompanied by one of the most magnificent processions of military and civic associations, trades, and professions, ever witnessed in the United States. The "first stone" was laid by the venerable Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, then over ninety years of age, on the southwestern line of the city. After he had performed this service, addressing himself to one of his friends, he said, "I consider this among the most important acts of my life, second only to my signing the Declaration of Independence, if even it be second to that." To the end of his life he continued a firm, unwavering friend of the

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

work, ready at all times, upon every emergency, to sustain it. . . .

The board of directors of the railroad company soon discovered that if they proceeded with the work it must be upon their own resources, without any governmental assistance. Having full confidence in the practicability of the undertaking, they determined to go on with renewed energy. This determination was clearly evinced by the president and several of the directors, who advanced \$200,000, to meet an extraordinary expense, beyond the estimates of the engineer (required for the great cut of 78 feet depth, extending 1,300 yards, encountered a few miles from the city), which at first threatened a suspension of the progress of the work. The construction of a railroad being an untried experiment, they of course had many difficulties to encounter; but the energy of President Thomas and his board of directors inspired all with confidence, and the enterprise continued to meet with general favor from all classes of their fellow citizens. A perusal of the early reports of President Thomas will cause the reader to wonder that the formidable obstacles almost daily encountered did not crush the energies of the company and induce them to abandon the work as hopeless and futile. . . .

During the fall of the year 1829, the laying of the rails was commenced upon the division of the road within the city of Baltimore. The first rails were laid upon wooden sleepers at the eastern end of the Mount Clare premises, near the intersection with Poppleton Street, which was not then laid out. The first division of the road was

---

## A RAILROAD TO THE MISSISSIPPI

---

opened for the transportation of passengers on the 22d of May, 1830, being but a little more than eighteen months from the commencement of the work upon it; but the preparation of the necessary cars was not effected until the early part of June following, from which time the traveling on this division, extending to Ellicott's Mills, continued constant and uninterrupted, horse and mule power being used for drawing the cars. Locomotives at this period were in their infancy, and until the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railroad during this same year, the utmost speed in travel obtained by locomotives did not exceed six miles an hour; the question, indeed, had not then been decided as to what kind of motive power would prove most advantageous.

During the first few months after the road was opened, the people of Baltimore continued to throng to the depot, to try this novel mode of travel; and Ellicott's Mills became as familiar to them as if within the corporate limits of the city. The number of cars was, however, very limited, and but one track was completed, notwithstanding which, the receipts up to the first of October, four months from the time of putting the cars on, amounted to \$20,012.36. The merchandise and produce offered was ten times more than could be conveyed with all the means of transportation in possession of the company. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, being the first road in operation in the country, and almost in the world, for the transportation of passengers and merchandise, of course attracted visitors from almost every section of the United States, as well as from some parts of Europe. . . .

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

On the 1st of April, 1832, the first train of ears, bearing produce, which had descended the Potomac to the Point of Rocks, arrived in Baltimore. The trade with that point continued to increase rapidly, and warehouses, dwelling and public houses, were erected there, so that quite a town soon formed. The travel and trade to Frederick, and the increasing business of that portion of the main stem between the Monocacy and the Point of Rocks, were soon found to constitute no unimportant item in the general receipts of the company.

In the spring of 1836 the board deeming that the time had arrived for the adoption of vigorous measures toward the prosecution of the road from Harper's Ferry westward, to the points of its original destination, an engineer force was organized for the purpose of making detailed surveys and examinations between Harper's Ferry and the summit of the Alleghanies, with the view of continuing them afterward to Pittsburgh and Wheeling. Benjamin H. Latrobe, Esq., was appointed to the post of engineer of location and construction on the 1st day of July, 1836, and took immediate charge of the surveys, and the direction of the several corps upon field-duty. The rough and mountainous country over which the surveys had to be carried, and the importance of leaving no practicable route, of the many that presented themselves, unexamined, rendered the labors of the engineers necessarily very tedious and prolonged.

There was a project of a railroad from Cincinnati to St. Louis as early as 1832, for a portion of which a charter was obtained, while some subscriptions were actually paid. Those who are

## A RAILROAD TO THE MISSISSIPPI

---

most familiar with the trials and struggles attendant upon the progress of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad do not hesitate to accord to Henry D. Bacon the highest praise for his extraordinary efforts in furthering the interests of this great undertaking.

The completion of the Northwest Virginia arm of the Baltimore and Ohio Road—from Grafton, on the main line, to Parkersburg on the Ohio—and the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, from a point near Parkersburg to Cincinnati, formed the very shortest line between that city and the seaboard, and also with the Ohio and Mississippi Road, the shortest line between the seaboard and the city of St. Louis. . . .

The three great works whose varied history we have thus narrated were complete at last—affording a direct and continuous line westward from Baltimore to St. Louis—and were ready for public inauguration as one grand whole. The Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Company took the initiative, and, acting independently of the other companies named, proceeded to make arrangements for a celebration worthy the occasion which saw their own line in full and perfect operation from the Ohio to the Mississippi. It was determined that the chief feature of the celebration should be a grand railroad excursion of guests from Eastern cities, over the line of the road, to St. Louis.

Public interest in the contemplated excursion soon became very general in New York, and the rush of applicants for tickets was far beyond reasonable possibility of supply. The papers of the day teemed with anticipatory notices, and the favored recipient of an invitation to the fete was

---

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

looked upon by his friends as a lucky individual. Many of these guests from New York and points east of that city started a week before the date of the excursion, proceeding by the northern lines of railroad, touching and halting briefly at Niagara, and various other points of interest easily taken in their route. In the West, meantime, ample preparations were making to receive and entertain the expected strangers. At St. Louis and Cincinnati the citizens and public authorities vied with each other in arrangements which should favorably impress their visitors, enhance their enjoyment, and give due *éclat* to the occasion. At Marietta, Chillicothe, and other places the citizens also prepared themselves for such exhibitions of Western hospitality as the time of the excursionists would enable them to accept. One of the most gratifying incidents of this entire affair was the heartiness with which the people all along the line of the roads about to be opened thus practically express their interest in the enterprise, and the generosity with which they arranged for the reception of their stranger-friends from the East.

The only regular excursion party from an Eastern city to Cincinnati was arranged under the auspices of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, leaving Baltimore at six o'clock in the morning of Monday, the 1st of June, 1857. A large and jovial company fairly filled the train of neat, comfortable, and commodious cars provided for the occasion. Upon the assistant-master of transportation especially devolved the duty of looking after the social comfort of the guests, and "Captain" George A. Rawlings, *"the model conductor,"* was put in charge of the

---

## A RAILROAD TO THE MISSISSIPPI

---

train. A magnificent and powerful locomotive, under the care of an experienced engineer, furnished the power.

When all was ready, the train moved out of the station amid the parting cheers of quite an assemblage of spectators, whose salute was eloquently answered by the "Independent Blues" band of Baltimore under Professor Holland, which occupied the front car, having been engaged by the Marietta Company to contribute their excellent musical performances to the pleasures of the trip. The band accompanied us all the way to St. Louis, availing themselves of every suitable occasion to afford us new and grateful evidence of their taste and skill. . . .

A special time-table had been issued for the trip by Dr. Woodhouse, the master of transportation, securing perfect safety, and enabling us to run at a high speed, without fear of meeting sudden danger. To guard against accidents to the motive power, extra locomotives were stationed at convenient and most distant points, ready to supply the place of any which should become disabled. These precautions, and a free use of the magnetic-telegraph line belonging to the railroad company, and by which the movements of their trains are continually regulated, rendered accident or delay almost impossible.

It was nearly midnight of Thursday when the regular excursion train reached the Mississippi River, at Illinoistown, directly opposite St. Louis; but hundreds of pine torches, which had been planted in the ground on each side of the track for several hundred yards, brilliantly illuminated the scene. Our arrival was instantly announced

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

to the citizens across the stream by the firing of cannon from the bluffs.

Four large and elegant Mississippi River steamers—the *Reindeer*, *Baltimore*, *Illinois*, and the *Vernon*—had been moored to the levee on the Illinois side of the river, near the point at which the cars stopped. These, brilliantly illuminated, presented a very pretty spectacle, in the darkness of the evening. The guests were immediately escorted on board, and provided with staterooms for the night. In a few minutes a sumptuous supper was served on board the boats, to which ample justice was accorded by the wearied travelers, who then betook themselves to rest. During the night the St. Louisians celebrated the occasion by plentiful displays of fireworks, of which the strangers, who chose, obtained a fine view, as well as of the great city across the river, lighted up by its thousands of gas-burners, and its long levee brilliant with the glare of torches, Roman candles, Grecian fires, or other pyrotechnic devices.

---

## THE FIRST ATLANTIC CABLE CELE- BRATION AND THE WRECK OF THE CABLE

(1858)

BY HENRY M. FIELD<sup>1</sup>

Whoever shall write the history of popular enthusiasms must give a large space to the Atlantic telegraph. Never did the tidings of any great achievement—whether in peace or war—more truly electrify a nation. No doubt, the impression was the greater because it took the country by surprize. Had the attempt succeeded in June it would have found a people prepared for it. But the failure of the first expedition, added to that of the previous year, settled the fate of the enterprise in the minds of the public. It was a very grand but hopeless undertaking; and its projectors shared the usual lot of those who conceive vast designs, and venture on great enterprises which are not successful—to be regarded with a mixture of derision and

<sup>1</sup> From Field's "History of the Atlantic Telegraph to the End of 1865." Mr. Field was a brother of Cyrus W. Field, the chief promoter of the cable. He was long editor of *The Evangelist*, a weekly religious newspaper.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

pity. Such was the temper of the public mind, when at noon of Thursday, the 5th of August, the following dispatch was received:

United States Frigate *Niagara*,  
Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, August 5, 1858.

“To the Associated Press, New York:

“The Atlantic Telegraph fleet sailed from Queenstown, Ireland, Saturday, July 17th, and met in mid-ocean Wednesday, July 28th. Made the splice at 1 P.M., Thursday, the 29th, and separated—the *Agamemnon* and *Valorous*, bound to Valentia, Ireland; the *Niagara* and *Gorgon*, for this place, where they arrived yesterday, and this morning the end of the cable will be landed.

“It is 1,696 nautical, or 1,950 statute, miles from the telegraph-house at the head of Valentia harbor to the telegraph-house at the Bay of Bulls, Trinity Bay, and for more than two-thirds of this distance the water is over two miles in depth. The cable has been paid out from the *Agamemnon* at about the same speed as from the *Niagara*. The electric signals sent and received through the whole cable are perfect.

“The machinery for paying out the cable worked in the most satisfactory manner, and was not stopped for a single moment from the time the splice was made until we arrived here.

“Captain Hudson, Messrs. Everett and Woodhouse, the engineers, the electricians, the officers of the ship, and, in fact, every man on board the telegraph fleet, has exerted himself to the utmost to make the expedition successful, and by the blessing of Divine Providence it has succeeded.

---

## THE FIRST ATLANTIC CABLE

---

“After the end of the cable is landed and connected with the land line of telegraph, and the *Niagara* has discharged some cargo belonging to the telegraph company, she will go to St. John’s for coal, and then proceed at once to New York.

“CYRUS W. FIELD.”

The impression of this simple announcement it is impossible to conceive. It was immediately telegraphed to all parts of the United States, and everywhere produced the greatest excitement. In some places all business was suspended; men rushed into the streets, and flocked to the offices where the news was received. An impressive scene was witnessed at a religious convocation in New England. At Andover, Mass., the news arrived while the alumni of the Theological Seminary were celebrating their semicentennial anniversary by a dinner. One thousand persons were present, all of whom rose to their feet, and gave vent to their excited feelings by continued and enthusiastic cheers. When quiet was restored, Rev. Dr. Adams, of New York, said his heart was too full for a speech, and suggested, as the more fitting utterance of what all felt, that they should join in thanksgiving to Almighty God. Rev. Dr. Hawes of Hartford then led the assembly in fervent prayer, acknowledging the great event as from the hand of God, and as calculated to hasten the triumphs of civilization and Christianity. Then all standing up together, sang, to the tune of Old Hundred, the majestic doxology. Thus, said Dr. Hawes, “we have now consecrated this new power, so far as our agency

---

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

is concerned, to the building up of the truth." In New York the news was received at first with some incredulity. But as it was confirmed by subsequent dispatches, the city broke out into tumultuous rejoicing. Never was there such an outburst of popular feeling. In Boston a hundred guns were fired on the common, and the bells of the city were rung for an hour to give utterance to the general joy. Similar scenes were witnessed in all parts of the United States. I have now before me the New York papers of August, 1858, and from the memorable 5th, when the landing took place, to the end of the month, they contain hardly anything else than popular demonstrations in honor of the Atlantic telegraph. It was indeed a national jubilee. . . .

The next morning, August 17th, the city of New York was awakened by the thunder of artillery. A hundred guns were fired in the Park at daybreak, and the salute was repeated at noon. At this hour, flags were flying from all the public buildings, and the bells of the principal churches began to ring, reminding one of Tennyson's ode to the happy Christmas bells that were ringing out the departing year:

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

That night the city was illuminated. Never had it seen such a brilliant spectacle. It seemed as if it were intended to light up the very heavens. Such was the blaze of light around the City Hall that the cupola caught fire, and was consumed, and the Hall itself narrowly escaped

---

## THE FIRST ATLANTIC CABLE

---

destruction. Similar demonstrations took place in other parts of the United States. . .

While these demonstrations continued, every opposing voice was hushed in the chorus of national rejoicing; yet some there were, no doubt, who looked on with silent envy or whispered detraction. But who could grudge these honors to the hero of the hour—honors so hardly won, and which, as it proved, were soon to give place to harsh censures and unjust imputations?

Alas for all human glory! Its paths lead but to the grave. Death is the end of human ambition. That very day that a whole city rose up to do honor to the Atlantic telegraph and its author it gave its last throb, and that first cable was thenceforth to sleep forever silent in its ocean grave. The Atlantic cable was dead! That word fell heavy as a stone on the hearts of those who had staked so much upon it. Years of labor and millions of capital were swept away in an hour into the bosom of the pitiless sea.

## CIVIL WAR IN KANSAS

(1855-1859)

BY GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON<sup>1</sup>

With the aid of a considerable Northern vote in Congress the South succeeded in passing the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, repealing the Missouri Compromise, and under the doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty" throwing all the territories open to slavery, at least as a possibility. The North at once took alarm, and the Free-soil party, newly named the Republican party, grew in numbers and enthusiasm as no other party had ever done before.

Events mightily aided this growth, driving into the Free-soil, or Republican, party many thousands of men who had before held aloof from a movement which they thought to be dangerous to the perpetuity of the Union and to peace within its borders. First of these events was the outbreak of civil war in Kansas. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise opened that territory at once to settlement by men from both sections and at the same time opened the question whether

<sup>1</sup> From Eggleston's "History of the Confederate War." By permission of the publishers, Sturgis & Walton Co. Copyright, 1910. This war broke out after rival streams of immigration had begun from the North and South following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Two constitutions were adopted—that bearing the names of Topeka, adopted in 1855 and prohibiting slavery, and that bearing the name Lecompton, adopted in 1857, and sanctioning it. Among

---

## CIVIL WAR IN KANSAS

---

it should become a free or a slave State. Incidentally a contest of factions began which raged hotly to the end.

Whether Kansas should be a slave State or a free State depended upon the will of the settlers alone. The land was in many respects a tempting one to emigrants in spite of the aridity of its western part, so that even without any incentive of politics its speedy settlement was quite a matter of course. But politics North and South enormously aided in that behalf. There was a rush from both sections to fill up and occupy the land in order to control it. From the Missouri border and from farther south slave-holders and the representatives of slavery poured into the territory in great numbers with the purpose of voting it into the Union as a slave State. In the slang of the period these were called "border ruffians." On the other hand, there was an "assisted emigration" from the North, the emigration of men whose way was paid in consideration of their votes and their rifle practise against slavery in Kansas. These called themselves "Free State Men," but they were called by their adversaries "Jayhawkers."

In order to promote the emigration of these men to Kansas, societies were formed in Massachusetts and other States which not only paid their way, but furnished them with rifles of an

the Northern men who went to Kansas was John Brown, closely associated afterward with the civil war which prevailed in that Territory. Finally, a constitution forbidding slavery, and known as the Wyandotte one, became the law of the Territory in 1859. Kansas was admitted as a free State in January, 1861, a few months before the firing on Fort Sumter.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

improved pattern, and ammunition in plenty, with the distinct understanding that it was their duty to ply both the bullet and the ballot in aid of the cause they represented. These two groups of men quickly fell by the ears, as it was intended that they should, and civil war in the strictest sense of that term ensued. John Brown—an able, adventurous, and fanatical man—took command of the free State forces, and between him and his adversaries there was a contest for supremacy which involved every outrage to which civil war, waged by uncivilized man, can give birth. Small battles were fought.<sup>3</sup> Men on either side were shot or hanged without mercy. Homes were desolated. Women and children were driven forth to suffer all the agonies of starvation, of cold, and of homelessness—all in aid of the voting one way or the other.

In our time such a situation in a territory subject to national control would be instantly ended by the sending of troops to the disturbed region with instructions to preserve order, to suppress all manner of lawlessness, and to protect all citi-

<sup>3</sup> The chief of these was the battle of Osawatomie, in 1856. Osawatomie lies 61 miles southwest of Kansas City. In 1856 it was one of the "Free State settlements" made in Kansas by the Immigrant Aid Society, and had become prominent in the contest between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery elements. John Brown lived in or near the place, and had already become aggressive as an Abolitionist leader. On May 24, 1856, five pro-slavery men were assassinated at Pottawatomie, the responsibility of which was placed on Brown. In August of this year an overwhelming force of invading pro-slavery men from Missouri attacked Osawatomie. Brown led the defense, which was heroically conducted, but suffered defeat, and Osawatomie afterward was almost completely destroyed.

---

## CIVIL WAR IN KANSAS

---

zens equally in the enjoyment of the peaceful possession of the land. But in the fifties the government of the United States was still unused to such exercise of its authority—parties were too evenly divided, political feeling was too hot and voters were far too sensitive, to admit of such a treatment of the situation as would in our time seem quite a matter of course. Troops were sent to Kansas, it is true, but in quite insufficient numbers and under inadequate instructions. So the war in Kansas went on and otherwise peaceful citizens of the Union actively aided it upon the one side or the other quite as if it had not been a civil war within the Union and in a territory in which the authority of Congress was supreme beyond even the possibility of question.

At the South companies of armed men were organized, equipped, and sent into Kansas nominally to settle there and vote to make a slave State of the territory, but really, if possible, to drive out every "Free State" man, or to overawe or overcome them all, so that the voting might all be one way. At the North similar companies of men were organized and armed and aided to emigrate for the purpose of doing very much the same thing to the representatives of slavery and achieving a contrary result at the ballot-box.

Many of the men on both sides were not genuine settlers at all, but merely armed bandits engaged in a mission of violence. Yet on both sides they were supported, encouraged, and defended in their lawlessness by the pulpit, the press, and every other agency of civilization. Elections were held in the territory in which both sides voted

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

their men without question as to their age, the length of their residence within the territory, or any other qualification for voting which the loose laws of the time provided. Every devilish device of fraud and swindling that had up to that time been invented by ingeniously unscrupulous politicians was employed on the one side or the other, without so much as a qualm of conscience or a scruple of conventionality.

It was war that these men were engaged in, and elections were a mere pretense. War habitually has no scruples as to the means it uses for the overcoming of an adversary. On each side men voted who had arrived within the territory just in time for the election, cheerfully perjuring themselves in order to do so, an incident which nobody seemed to regard as a serious matter. Each side voted its men as often as it could under the loose election laws of the time, and in some cases that was very often. Ballot-boxes were stuffed with fraudulent votes by one side and were seized and destroyed by the other. Conventions fraudulently chosen by such practises as these framed constitutions which were one after another rejected by Congress.

The story need not be told here in further detail. The struggle continued until the end of the decade, and it was not until after the Confederate War had begun that the Territory was admitted to the Union as a State. In the meanwhile, the eyes and minds of all the people in the country were concentrated upon that center of disturbance, and the situation there enormously increased the intensity of that acrimony which already characterized the relations of men North and South.

## THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF WASHINGTON IRVING

(1859)

BY EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN<sup>1</sup>

The obsequies of a man like Washington Irving are not only a matter of the deepest interest to those who dwell near the legendary shores of the Hudson and the Sound—whose traditions he so exquisitely gave to the world—and to every American, the literature of whose country he so purified and ennobled—but to every Old and New World reader of that language, to which he added some of its choicest treasures, and with which his fame is coextensive and secure.

It was our privilege to mingle reverently with the circle of relatives and near friends, who assembled yesterday morning at Sunnyside, before Mr. Irving's remains were conveyed to the church at Tarrytown, where the public funeral services were held. The day was clear and warm, the landscape mellowed with the haze of the lingering Indian summer, and the broad Tappan Zee,

<sup>1</sup> From Mr. Stedman's article in the *New York Tribune* of December 2, 1859. After serving as journalist for some years in Connecticut, Mr. Stedman came to New York and found employment on the *Tribune*, under Horace Greeley, with which paper as a contributor he was at intervals employed for many years afterward.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

the western uplands, and the romantic fastnesses of "Wolfert's Roost"<sup>2</sup> never blended in more picturesque harmony. But the magician, who had dwelt amid and loved the scene, was silent forever—the charm was broken, and the wand snapt in twain! And, as we wound through the path he had so often trod, it seemed as if the elms and maples, in their naked contrast, were mourning the departure of him whose home they had guarded lovingly and so long.

The remains were yesterday morning, for the first time, placed in the coffin, and were lying in the northwest parlor of the quaintly-gabled cottage, familiar to those who have loved to read of Irving. To all was granted a long, last look at the precious dust, ere it left forever the spot where his years were so ripe and lustrous. Very few were present, except the immediate family connections, it being understood that no services were to be held at the house.

The body was robed in a plain black suit, with white cravat and collar, and as the light struck the features of the deceased it seemed almost as if he were sleeping—so calm and smooth had the touch of death left them. The face was thinner than we had seen it, but there was the same repose, and the same imaginative, noble brow. At the left of the coffin hung the celebrated portrait of Jarvis; by its side were the center-table—as he left it, covered with books—and his favorite chair, standing in the position where he occupied it last. It seemed as if the grief of the bereaved ones was tempered even

<sup>2</sup>The name by which Irving's home, Sunnyside, had been known when he bought the property.

---

## IRVING'S DEATH AND BURIAL

---

there and then by the thought of his well-rounded life, and the euthanasia that was his lot. At about 12 M. the family procession left Sunnyside, with the body, winding through the lovely grounds to the east, and then two miles north, over a road lined with beautiful trees and mansions, to the village of Tarrytown.

This church, where the public services were held, is Episcopal, and is the one of which Mr. Irving was a communicant, a warden, and a constant attendant.\* The Rev. Dr. William Creighton is the rector, and the Rev. James S. Spencer his assistant. It is a plain, brick edifice, erected some twenty-two years ago, and will seat about 600 people. The style of architecture is Grecian, but the windows are Gothic, and of stained glass. The church was filled, except the seats reserved for the families and invited guests, with the inhabitants of Tarrytown, Irvington, and vicinity, and the walks in front, as well as the church-yard, were completely occupied. At about 12:30 o'clock the train from New York brought from 700 to 800 of our citizens, and residents of towns along the road, who had left their daily pursuits to mingle in the last sad rites.

Among the well-known literary and professional men who were present, we observed N. P. Willis, Esq. (who had come down from Idlewild, with his family, on a sad and far different occasion from that of his last visit to Sunnyside, so vividly described in his late letter); the Hon. George Bancroft; ex-Judge Kent; Henry T. Tuckerman, Esq.; the Hon. Ogden Edwards; the Hon. John Van Buren; Frederick Saunders, Esq.,

\* The church is still standing on Broadway, in Tarrytown.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

Astor Librarian. Thirteen of the members of the New York Board of Councilmen were also present in pursuance of the joint resolutions adopted Wednesday, but not an alderman appeared; also Messrs. William B. Astor, George Folsom, and the other trustees of the Astor Library. A large number of divines, from our own and other cities, were in the chancel, testifying by their robed presence to the goodness and purity of the departed man.

In accordance with the often express wish of Mr. Irving, the services were strictly in keeping with the beautiful form of the Church of England, with no unusual address or ceremony. A few minutes after one, the coffin was brought up the south aisle, preceded by the Rev. Dr. Creighton and the Rev. Mr. Spencer, the latter of whom read the form, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord," and the pall-bearers, of whom there were eight, as follows: Gouverneur Kemble of Cold Spring, Putnam County, the oldest intimate friend of the deceased; Dr. J. G. Cogswell, Librarian of the Astor Library; Prof. James Renwick; Col. James A. Hamilton; Col. James Watson Webb; Henry Shelton, Esq.; Messrs. George T. Morgan and Nathaniel B. Holmes—the two latter gentlemen being covestrymen of Mr. Irving, and his near friends.

The mourning relatives followed the coffin and took the seats reserved for them. While the body was being placed in front of the chancel, the choir chanted the anthem from the 39th and 90th Psalms: "Lord, let me know my end, and the number of my days." Directly following, the

---

## IRVING'S DEATH AND BURIAL

---

Lesson familiar to all, from the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, was impressively read by the Rev. Dr. Creighton. At the conclusion of the Lesson the choir sang the last three stanzas of the 26th Hymn, commencing "Behold, the unnumbered Angel host." At its close the Rector stated there would be no more services at the church, and that all who chose could have an opportunity of viewing the features of the deceased.

Passing up the south side and down the north the people looked at the beloved remains. The coffin was of dark rosewood, plainly but richly studded, and adorned with three wreaths of japonicas, entwined with laurel. On a silver plate was the simple inscription: "Washington Irving. Born, April 3, A.D., 1783; died, November 28, A.D., 1859." Just before the lid was closed, a ray of sunlight, shooting through the illuminated glass of the south window, lit up the serene face with a glory that seemed the very reflex of the brighter land.

About 2 P.M. the procession was formed to convey the remains to the last resting place. It moved in the following order: First, the clergy; second, pall-bearers; third, the hearse; fourth, relations and invited guests; fifth, the Common Council of the City of New York; sixth, scholars of the Irving Institute, to the number of about 100, on foot; seventh, citizens in general. The procession itself was about one-quarter of a mile in length, and many hundreds beside had already gathered in the cemetery prior to its arrival. Moving still northward, with the silvery Hudson and the nestling village ever in view, it

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

passed the André monument on the left, and so on for a mile, to the lovely hill where the Tarrytown cemetery is located. The streets through which it moved were draped with mourning, as, indeed, were the shops and dwellings through the place; the flags at the river-side were at half-mast; the church bells tolling, and all business appeared to be suspended for the day.

This burying-ground is romantically located on a hill overlooking the famous "Sleepy Hollow," where the bridge of the "Headless Horseman" is still pointed out. Near the entrance is the old Dutch church alluded to by Mr. Irving in his works. It was erected in 1699, by Frederick Philipse and Catherine Van Courtland, his wife —so says the ancient tablet. The lot of the Irving family has a south elevation on the southwest side of the ground, and commands the loveliest view of the Hudson anywhere obtainable. In it are already deposited the ashes of William Irving and wife—the parents of Washington; his brothers, Peter and William, and the wife of the latter; and the wife and three children of General E. Irving, the surviving brother of the deceased. All the graves are marked with very plain and unpretending marble stones. The grave of Washington Irving was made, at his own request, by the side of his mother's.

On the arrival of the funeral cortége at the spot, the solemn burial service was read by the Rev. Dr. Creighton, while thousands gathered mournfully and silently around. The rector seemed greatly affected in the performance of this last office. Some members of the choir *chanted* the anthem: "I heard a voice from

---

## IRVING'S DEATH AND BURIAL

---

Heaven, saying, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," during which the aged brother of the deceased was visibly overcome. This concluded the services, and the people lingeringly dispersed, but not till after the grave was filled with earth, and sodded over, and honored with a wreath of bays—the tribute to fame—which a lady placed last of all at its head.

And there Washington Irving rests—amid the very scenes he legendized, and consecrated for all time. Fit burial-place for the author and the man; on the banks of his darling river—the trees he best loved waving over him—his tomb the shrine of the dearest literary associations, the future Mecca of many a pilgrim.

General Ebenezer Irving, the surviving brother of the deceased, is 86 years old, and was, consequently, Washington's senior by ten years. He feels keenly the shock of his brother's death, having thought that, in the course of nature, his own summons would have been the first. His three unmarried daughters, Catharine, Julia, and Mary, are the nieces who have kept house for the deceased, and tenderly cherished and lightened his declining age. Another daughter, Sarah, is the wife of William Grinnell, Esq., of Havana, N. Y. His son, the Rev. Pierre M. Irving, of Brighton, Staten Island, was the last person to whom Mr. Irving spoke before his death. The Rev. Theodore Irving, also of Staten Island, is another son—and there are two others, whose names we did not obtain. Pierre P. Irving, Esq., nephew of the deceased by an older brother, and brother of Mrs. Moses H. Grinnell, forms one of the bereaved family at Sunnyside.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

Those who have seen much of Mr. Irving, for some time past say that he retained to the last his erectness of posture and noble bearing. A few days before his death, while suffering painfully from the asthmatic attack which hastened it, he stooped a very little only, as if from weakness in the chest. His death was wrongly reported as having taken place at eight o'clock on Monday evening. He conversed with his usual spirits and mingled in the family amusements until about ten o'clock, when he rose to retire, and had proceeded as far as his bed-chamber, on the second story, before he fell in death.

It has been said that the most trying test to which the character of a famous author can be subjected is the estimation in which he is held by those every-day neighbors, who feel the actual contact of his social influence, and know him best as a man. The full roundness of fame is seen better at a distance, and the absorbing pursuits of successful authorship are too apt to engender harsh mannerisms that in time overcome the many lesser virtues of private life. But Mr. Irving could well abide the judgment of his fellow townsmen. Not alone the wealthy, well-read residents—who have so enhanced the natural beauties of the vicinity of Sunnyside by their exquisite summer haunts, and revered and loved him with an intellectual sympathy—but the humble villagers and farmers, to whom he was so well known, were among the truest mourners that followed him to his grave.

## JOHN BROWN AT HARPER'S FERRY

(1859)

### I

#### HIS ATTEMPT TO RAISE A SLAVE INSURRECTION

HORACE GREELEY'S ACCOUNT<sup>1</sup>

On the 17th of October, 1859, this country was bewildered and astounded, while the fifteen Slave States were convulsed with fear, rage, and hate, by telegraphic dispatches from Baltimore and Washington, announcing the outbreak, at Harper's Ferry, of a conspiracy of Abolitionists and negroes, having for its object the devastation and ruin of the South, and the massacre of her white inhabitants. A report that President Buchanan had been proclaimed Emperor and Autocrat of the North American continent, and had quietly arrested and imprisoned all the members of Congress and judges of the Supreme Court, by way of strengthening his usurpation, would not have seemed more essentially incredible, nor have aroused a more intense excitement.

Probably the more prevalent sensation at first

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Greeley, then editor of the *New York Tribune*, of which he was the founder, wrote this account soon after the close of the Civil War. It was printed originally as a chapter in his two-volume work entitled "The American Conflict," which, in its day, was a famous book.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

excited by this intelligence was that of blank incredulity. Harper's Ferry being the seat of a national armory, at which a large number of mechanics and artizans were usually employed by the Government, it was supposed by many that some collision respecting wages or hours of labor had occurred between the officers and the workmen, which had provoked a popular tumult, and perhaps a stoppage of the trains passing through that village on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; and that this, magnified by rumor and alarm, had afforded a basis for these monstrous exaggerations. Yet, as time wore on, further advices, with particulars and circumstances, left no room to doubt the substantial truth of the original report. An attempt had actually been made to excite a slave insurrection in northern Virginia, and the one man in America to whom such an enterprise would not seem utter insanity and suicide was at the head of it. . . .

Harper's Ferry was then a village of some five thousand inhabitants, lying on the Virginia side of the Potomac, and on either side of its principal tributary, the Shenandoah, which here enters it from the South. Its site is a mere nest or cup among high, steep mountains; the passage of the united rivers through the Blue Ridge at this point having been pronounced by Jefferson a spectacle which one might well cross the Atlantic to witness and enjoy. Here the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad crosses the Potomac; and the rich valley of the Shenandoah is traversed, for a considerable distance hence, by the Winchester and Harper's Ferry Railroad. Washington is 57 miles distant by turnpike; Baltimore, 80

---

## JOHN BROWN AT HARPER'S FERRY

---

miles by railroad. Modest as the village then was, space had been with difficulty found for its habitations, some of which were perched upon ground four hundred feet above the surface of the streams. One of its very few streets was entirely occupied by the workshops and offices of the national armory, and had an iron railing across its entrance. In the old arsenal building there were usually stored from 100,000 to 200,000 stand of arms. The knowledge of this had doubtless determined the point at which the first blow of the liberators was to be struck.

The forces with which Brown made his attack consisted of seventeen white and five colored men, tho it is said that others who escaped assisted outside by cutting the telegraph wires and tearing up the railroad track. The entrance of this petty army into Harper's Ferry on Sunday evening, October 17th, seems to have been effected without creating alarm. They first rapidly extinguished the lights of the town; then took possession of the armory buildings, which were only guarded by three watchmen, whom, without meeting resistance or exciting alarm, they seized and locked up in the guard-house. It is probable that they were aided, or, at least, guided, by friendly negroes belonging in the village. At half past ten the watchman at the Potomac bridge was seized and secured. At midnight, his successor, arriving, was hailed by Brown's sentinels, but ran, one shot being fired at him from the bridge. He gave the alarm, but still nothing stirred. At a quarter past one, the western train arrived, and its conductor found the bridge guarded by armed men. He and others attempted to walk across

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

but were turned back by presented rifles. One man, a negro, was shot in the back, and died next morning. The passengers took refuge in the hotel, and remained there several hours; the conductor properly refusing to pass the train over, tho permitted, at three o'clock, to do so.

A little after midnight the house of Colonel Washington was visited by six of Brown's men under Captain Stevens, who captured the Colonel, seized his arms, horses, etc., and liberated his slaves. On their return, Stevens and party visited the house of Mr. Alstadt and his son, whom they captured, and freed their slaves, These, with each male citizen as he appeared in the street, were confined in the armory until they numbered between forty and fifty. Brown informed his prisoners that they would be liberated on condition of writing to their friends to send a negro apiece as ransom. At daylight the train proceeded, Brown walking over the bridge with the conductor. Whenever any one asked the object of their captors, the uniform answer was, "To free the slaves"; and when one of the workmen, seeing an armed guard at the arsenal gate, asked by what authority they had taken possession of the public property, he was answered, "By the authority of God Almighty!"

The passenger train that sped eastward from Harper's Ferry, by Brown's permission, in the early morning of Monday, October 17th, left that place completely in the military possession of the insurrectionists. They held, without dispute, the arsenal, with its offices, workshops, and grounds. Their sentinels stood on guard at the bridges and principal corners, and were seen

---

## JOHN BROWN AT HARPER'S FERRY

---

walking up and down the streets. Every workman who ignorantly approached the armory, as day dawned, was seized and imprisoned, with all other white males who seemed capable of making any trouble. By eight o'clock the number of prisoners had been swelled to sixty-odd, and the work was still proceeding.

But it was no longer entirely one-sided. The white Virginians, who had arms, and who remained unmolested in their houses, prepared to use them. Soon after daybreak, as Brown's guards were bringing two citizens to a halt, they were fired on by a man named Turner, and directly afterward by a grocer named Boerly, who was instantly killed by the return fire. Several Virginians soon obtained possession of a room overlooking the armory gates, and fired thence at the sentinels who guarded them, one of whom fell dead, and another—Brown's son Watson—was mortally wounded. Still, throughout the forenoon, the liberators remained masters of the town. There were shots fired from one side or the other at intervals, but no more casualties reported. The prisoners were by turns permitted to visit their families under guard, to give assurance that they still lived and were kindly treated. Had Brown chosen to fly to the mountains with his few followers, he might still have done so, tho with a much slenderer chance of impunity than if he had, according to his original plan, decamped at midnight with such arms and ammunition as he could bear away. Why he lingered, to brave inevitable destruction, is not certain; but it may fairly be presumed that he had private assurances that the negroes of the

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

surrounding country would rise at the first tidings of his movement, and come flocking to his standard; and he chose to court the desperate chances of remaining where arms and ammunition for all could abundantly be had. True, he afterward said that he had arms enough already, either on or about his premises; but, if so, why seize Harper's Ferry at all?

At all events, if his doom was already sealed, his delay at least hastened it. Half an hour after noon, a militia force, one hundred strong, arrived from Charlestown, the county seat, and were rapidly disposed so as to command every available exit from the place. In taking the Shenandoah bridge, they killed one of the insurgents, and captured William Thompson, a neighbor of Brown at Elba, unwounded. The rifle-works were next attacked, and speedily carried, being defended by five insurgents only. These attempted to cross the river, and four of them succeeded in reaching a rock in the middle of it, whence they fought with 200 Virginians, who lined either bank, until two of them were dead, and a third mortally wounded, when the fourth surrendered. Kagi, Brown's secretary of war, was one of the killed. William H. Leeman, one of Brown's captains, being pursued by scores, plunged into the river, a Virginian wading after him. Leeman turned round, threw up his empty hands, and cried, "Don't shoot!" The Virginian fired his pistol directly in the youth's face—he was but twenty-two—and shattered his head into fragments.

By this time all the houses around the armory *buildings* were held by the Virginians. Captain

---

## JOHN BROWN AT HARPER'S FERRY

---

Turner, who had fired the first shot in the morning, was killed by the sentinel at the arsenal gate as he was raising his rifle to fire. Here Dangerfield Newby, a Virginia slave, and Jim, one of Colonel Washington's negroes, with a free negro, who had lived on Washington's estate, were shot dead; and Oliver Brown, another of the old man's sons, being hit by a ball, came inside of the gate as his brother Watson had done, lay quietly down without a word, and in a few moments was dead. Mr. Beckham, mayor of the town, who came within range of the insurgents' rifles as they were exchanging volleys with the Virginians, was likewise killed.

At the suggestion of Mr. Kitzmiller, one of Brown's prisoners, Aaron D. Stevens, one of his most trusted followers from Kansas, was sent out with a flag of truce to call a parley, but was instantly shot down by the Virginians, receiving six balls in his person. Thompson, their prisoner, was attacked by scores of them in the parlor where he was confined, but saved for the moment by a young lady throwing herself between him and their presented rifles, because, as she afterward explained, she "did not want the carpet spoiled." He was dragged out to the bridge, there shot in cold blood, and his body riddled with balls at the base of the pier, whither he had fallen forty feet from the bridge.

By this time more militia had arrived from every quarter, and a party from Martinsburgh, led by a railroad conductor, attacked the armory buildings in the rear, while a detachment of the same force assailed them in front. Brown, seeing that his enemies were in overwhelming force,

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

retreated to the engine-house, where he repulsed his assailants, who lost two killed and six wounded.

Still militia continued to pour in; the telegraph and railroad having been completely repaired, so that the Government at Washington, Governor Wise at Richmond, and the authorities at Baltimore, were in immediate communication with Harper's Ferry, and hurrying forward troops from all quarters to overwhelm the remaining handful of insurgents, whom terror and rumor had multiplied to twenty times their actual number. At 5 P.M. Captain Simms arrived with militia from Maryland, and completed the investment of the armory buildings, whence eighteen prisoners had already been liberated upon the retreat of Brown to the engine-house. Colonel Baylor commanded in chief. The firing ceased at nightfall. Brown offered to liberate his prisoners, upon condition that his men should be permitted to cross the bridge in safety, which was refused. Night found Brown's forces reduced to three unwounded whites beside himself, with perhaps half a dozen negroes from the vicinity. Eight of the insurgents were already dead; another lay dying beside the survivors; two were captives mortally wounded, and one other unhurt. Around the few survivors were 1,500 armed, infuriated foes. Half a dozen of the party, who had been sent out at early morning by Brown to capture slaveholders and liberate slaves, were absent, and unable, even if willing, to rejoin their chief. They fled during the night to Maryland and Pennsylvania; but most of them were ultimately captured. During that night,

---

## JOHN BROWN AT HARPER'S FERRY

---

Colonel Lee, with 90 United States marines and two pieces of artillery, arrived, and took possession of the armory guard, very close to the engine-house.

Brown, of course, remained awake and alert through the night, discomfited and beyond earthly hope, but perfectly cool and calm. Said Governor Wise in a speech at Richmond soon after:

“Colonel Washington said that Brown was the coolest man he ever saw in defying death and danger. With one son dead by his side, and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand, held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm, and to sell their lives as dearly as possible.”

Conversing with Colonel Washington during that solemn night, he said he had not prest his sons to join him in this expedition, but did not regret their loss—they had died in a good cause.

At seven in the morning, after a parley which resulted in nothing, the marines advanced to the assault, broke in the door of the engine-house by using a ladder as a battering-ram, and rusht into the building. One of the defenders was shot and two marines wounded; but the odds were too great; in an instant all resistance was over. Brown was struck in the face with a saber and knocked down, after which the blow was several times repeated, while a soldier ran a bayonet twice into the old man’s body. All the insurgents, it was said, would have been killed on the spot had the Virginians been able to distinguish them with certainty from their prisoners.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

### II

#### THE CAPTURE OF BROWN

COL. ROBERT E. LEE'S OFFICIAL REPORT<sup>1</sup>

I have the honor to report, for the information of the Secretary of War, that on arriving here on the night of the 17th instant, in obedience to Special Orders No. 194 of that date from your office, I learn that a party of insurgents, about 11 P.M. on the 16th, had seized the watchmen stationed at the armory, arsenal, rifle factory, and bridge across the Potomac, and taken possession of those points. They then dispatched six men, under one of their party, called Captain Aaron C. Stevens, to arrest the principal citizens in the neighborhood and incite the negroes to join in the insurrection. The party took Colonel L. W. Washington from his bed about 1:30 A.M. on the 17th, and brought him, with four of his servants, to this place. Mr. J. H. Allstadt and six of his servants were in the same manner seized about 3 A.M., and arms placed in the hands of the negroes. Upon their return here, John E. Cook, one of the party sent to Mr. Washington's, was dispatched to Maryland, with Mr. Washington's wagon, two of his servants, and three of Mr. Allstadt's, for arms and ammunition, etc.

As day advanced, and the citizens of Harper's

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Lee, afterward General Lee of the Civil War, commanded the forces sent to Harper's Ferry to oppose Brown. He had graduated from West Point in 1829, served in the Mexican War, and been superintendent of West Point.

---

## THE CAPTURE OF JOHN BROWN

---

Ferry commenced their usual avocations, they were separately captured, to the number of forty, as well as I could learn, and confined in one room of the fire-engine house of the armory, which seems early to have been selected as a point of defense. About 11 A.M. the volunteer companies from Virginia began to arrive, and the Jefferson Guards and volunteers from Charlestown, under Captain J. W. Rowen, I understood, were first on the ground. The Hamtramck Guards, Captain V. M. Butler; the Shepherdstown troop, Captain Jacob Reinhart; and Captain Alburtis's company from Martinsburg arrived in the afternoon. These companies, under the direction of Colonels R. W. Taylor and John T. Gibson, forced the insurgents to abandon their positions at the bridge and in the village, and to withdraw within the armory inclosure, where they fortified themselves in the fire-engine house, and carried ten of their prisoners for the purpose of insuring their safety and facilitating their escape, whom they termed hostages. . . .

After sunset more troops arrived. Captain B. B. Washington's company from Winchester, and three companies from Fredericktown, Md., under Colonel Shriver. Later in the evening the companies from Baltimore, under General Charles C. Edgerton, second light brigade, and a detachment of marines, commanded by Lieutenant J. Green accompanied by Major Russell, of that corps, reached Sandy Hook, about one and a half miles east of Harper's Ferry. At this point I came up with these last-named troops, and leaving General Edgerton and his command on the Maryland side of the river for the night, caused

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

the marines to proceed to Harper's Ferry, and placed them within the armory grounds to prevent the possibility of the escape of the insurgents. Having taken measures to halt, in Baltimore, the artillery companies ordered from Fort Monroe, I made preparations to attack the insurgents at daylight. But for the fear of sacrificing the lives of some of the gentlemen held by them as prisoners in a midnight assault, I should have ordered the attack at once.

Their safety was the subject of painful consideration, and to prevent, if possible, jeopardizing their lives, I determined to summon the insurgents to surrender. As soon after daylight as the arrangements were made, Lieutenant J. E. B. Stewart, First Cavalry, who had accompanied me from Washington as staff officer, was dispatched, under a flag, with a written summons. . . . . Knowing the character of the leader of the insurgents, I did not expect it would be accepted. I had therefore directed that the volunteer troops, under their respective commanders, should be paraded on the lines assigned them outside the armory, and had prepared a storming party of twelve marines, under their commander, Lieutenant Green, and had placed them close to the engine-house, and secure from its fire. Three marines were furnished with sledge-hammers to break in the doors, and the men were instructed how to distinguish our citizens from the insurgents; to attack with the bayonet, and not to injure the blacks detained in custody unless they resisted. Lieutenant Stewart was also directed not to receive from the insurgents any counter *propositions*. If they accepted the terms offered,

---

## THE CAPTURE OF JOHN BROWN

---

they must immediately deliver up their arms and release their prisoners. If they did not, he must, on leaving the engine-house, give me the signal. My object was, with a view of saving our citizens, to have as short an interval as possible between the summons and the attack.

The summons, as I had anticipated, was rejected. At the concerted signal the storming party moved quickly to the door and commenced the attack. The fire-engines within the house had been placed by the besieged close to the doors. The doors were fastened by ropes, the spring of which prevented their being broken by the blows of the hammers. The men were therefore ordered to drop the hammers, and, with a portion of the reserve, to use as a battering-ram a heavy ladder, with which they dashed in a part of the door and gave admittance to the storming party. The fire of the insurgents up to this time had been harmless. At the threshold one marine fell mortally wounded. The rest, led by Lieutenant Green and Major Russell, quickly ended the contest. The insurgents that resisted were bayoneted. Their leader, John Brown, was cut down by the sword of Lieutenant Green, and our citizens were protected by both officers and men. The whole was over in a few minutes. . . .

From the information derived from the papers found upon the persons and among the baggage of the insurgents, and the statement of those now in custody, it appears that the party consisted of nineteen men—fourteen white and five black. That they were headed by John Brown, of some notoriety in Kansas, who in June last located himself in Maryland, at the Kennedy farm, where

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

he has been engaged in preparing to capture the United States works at Harper's Ferry. He avows that his object was the liberation of the slaves of Virginia, and of the whole South; and acknowledges that he has been disappointed in his expectations of aid from the black as well as white population, both in the Southern and Northern States. The blacks whom he forced from their homes in this neighborhood, as far as I could learn, gave him no voluntary assistance. . . . The result proves that the plan was the attempt of a fanatic or madman, which could only end in failure; and its temporary success was owing to the panic and confusion he succeeded in creating by magnifying his numbers.

### III

#### BROWN'S TRIAL AND EXECUTION

BY HORACE GREELEY<sup>1</sup>

Of course all Virginia, including her Governor, rushed to Harper's Ferry upon learning that all was over and the insurrection completely suppressed. The bleeding survivors were subjected to an alternation of queries and execrations, which they met bravely, as they had confronted the bullets of their numerous and ever-increasing foes. They answered frankly, save where their replies might possibly compromise persons still

<sup>1</sup> From Greeley's "American Conflict."

---

## THE CAPTURE OF JOHN BROWN

---

at liberty; and none of them sought to conceal the fact that they had struck for universal freedom at all hazards. The bearing of Brown was especially praised by his enemies (many of whom have since won notoriety in the ranks of the rebellion) as remarkably simple and noble. Among others, Mr. C. L. Vallandigham,<sup>2</sup> of Ohio, hastened to visit and catechize Brown, in the hope of making political capital out of his confessions, and was answered frankly and fully. On his return to Ohio he said:

“It is in vain to underrate either the man or the conspiracy. Captain John Brown is as brave and resolute a man as ever headed an insurrection; and in a good cause and with a sufficient force would have been a consummate partisan commander. He has coolness, daring, persistency, the stoic faith and patience, and a firmness of will and purpose unconquerable. He is the farthest possible remove from the ordinary ruffian, fanatic, or madman. Certainly, it was one of the best-planned and best-executed conspiracies that ever failed.”

On Wednesday evening, October 19th, after thirty hours of this discipline, the four surviving prisoners were conveyed to the jail at Charlestown under an escort of marines. Brown and Stevens, badly wounded, were taken in a wagon; Green and Coppoc, unhurt, walked between files of soldiers, followed by hundreds, who at first cried, “Lynch them!” but were very properly shamed into silence by Governor Wise.

It is not necessary to linger here over the legal

<sup>2</sup> Then a member of Congress, and afterward prominent among Democrats opposed to the war.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

proceedings in this case; nor do the complaints, so freely made at the time of indecent haste and unfair dealing, on the part of the Virginia authorities, seem fully justified. That the conviction and death of Brown and his associates were predetermined is quite probable; but the facts and the nature of the case were notorious beyond dispute; and Virginia had but this alternative—to hang John Brown or to abolish slavery. She did not choose to abolish slavery; and she had no remaining choice but to hang John Brown. And as to trying him and Stevens while still weak and suffering severely from their wounds—neither able at times to stand up—it must be considered that the whole State had been terror-stricken by the first news of their attempt, and that fears of insurrection and of an armed rescue were still widely prevalent. That the lawyers of the vicinage who were assigned to the defense of the prisoners did their duty timidly and feebly is certain; but they shared, of course, not only the prejudices, but the terrors, of their neighbors, and knew that the case, at any rate, was hopeless. . . .

The 2d of December was the day appointed for his execution. Nearly 3,000 militia were early on the ground. Fears of a forcible rescue or of a servile insurrection prevented a large attendance of citizens. Cannon were so planted as to sweep every approach to the jail, and to blow the prisoner into shreds upon the first intimation of tumult. Virginia held her breath until she heard that the old man was dead.

Brown rose at daybreak and continued writing with energy until half past ten, when he was told

---

## THE CAPTURE OF JOHN BROWN

---

to prepare to die. He shook hands with the sheriff, visited the cell of Copeland and Green, to whom he handed a quarter of a dollar each, saying he had no more use for money, and bade them adieu. He next visited Cook and Coppoc, the former of whom had made a confession, which he pronounced false; saying he had never sent Cook to Harper's Ferry, as he had stated.

He walked out of the jail at 11 o'clock; an eye-witness said—"with a radiant countenance, and the step of a conqueror." His face was even joyous, and it has been remarked that probably his was the lightest heart in Charlestown that day. A black woman with a little child in her arms stood by the door. He stopt a moment, and, stooping, kissed the child affectionately. Another black woman with a child, as he passed along, exclaimed: "God bless you, old man! I wish I could help you; but I can't." He looked at her with a tear in his eye. He mounted the wagon beside his jailer, Captain Avis, who had been one of the bravest of his captors, who had treated him very kindly, and to whom he was profoundly grateful. The wagon was instantly surrounded by six companies of militia. Being asked, on the way, if he felt any fear, he replied: "It has been a characteristic of me from infancy not to suffer from physical fear. I have suffered a thousand times more from bashfulness than from fear." The day was clear and bright, and he remarked, as he rode, that the country seemed very beautiful. Arrived at the gallows, he said: "I see no citizens here; where are they?" "None but the troops are allowed to be present," was the reply. "That ought not to be," said he;

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

"citizens should be allowed to be present as well as others." He bade adieu to some acquaintances at the foot of the gallows, and was first to mount the scaffold. His step was still firm, and his bearing calm, yet hopeful. The hour having come, he said to Captain Avis: "I have no words to thank you for all your kindness to me." His elbows and ankles being pinioned, the white cap drawn over his eyes, the hangman's rope adjusted around his neck, he stood waiting for death. "Captain Brown," said the sheriff, "you are not standing on the drop. Will you come forward?" "I can't see," was his firm answer; "you must lead me." The sheriff led him forward to the center of the drop. "Shall I give you a handkerchief and let you drop it as a signal?" "No; I am ready at any time; but do not keep me needlessly waiting." In defiance of this reasonable request, he was kept standing thus several minutes, while a military parade and display of readiness to repel an imaginary foe were enacted. The time seemed an hour to the impatient spectators; even the soldiers began to murmur, "Shame!" At last the order was given, the rope cut with a hatchet, and the trap fell; but so short a distance that the victim continued to struggle and to suffer for a considerable time. Being at length duly pronounced dead, he was cut down after thirty-eight minutes' suspension. His body was conveyed to Harper's Ferry and delivered to his widow, by whom it was borne to her far northern home among the mountains he so loved and where he was so beloved.

---

## THE ARRIVAL OF THE "GREAT EASTERN" IN NEW YORK HARBOR<sup>1</sup>

(1860)

After hopes deferred, and delays almost innumerable, the *Great Eastern* is at last upon us. While we write, her gigantic shadow is quivering in the waters of the North River, and before another sun has set our Oriental friends will be almost forgotten in the contemplation of this new sensation. Public interest has so often been aroused in connection with this huge triumph of art, and so often disappointed, that the various announcements of her trial trips and departure have heretofore had little more effect than to excite the disparaging criticisms of the multitude, who, with Yankee pride, are loath to believe in the promptness of English enterprise. Now that the Leviathan is fairly here, however, no one can be found who will gaze upon the magnificent proportions of this mighty ship and cast a slur upon the experiment which, if successful, is destined to revolutionize, in a measure, the maritime intercourse of the world. The first announcement of the arrival of the *Great Eastern* at this port

<sup>1</sup> As reported in the New York Herald, June 29, 1860. The *Great Eastern* was then, and until 1899 remained, the largest ship ever built. She was never commercially successful, but was long in use in laying ocean cables. Her length over all was 692 feet, her width 82, her displacement, 27,000 tons.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

was received by telegraph from Sandy Hook in the following dispatch:

“Sandy Hook, June 28th, 10:30 A.M.

“The steamship *Great Eastern* came in to the Lightship at half past seven o'clock this morning. She left the Needles at 10 A.M. on the 17th. With the exception of two days she has experienced fine weather. She has forty-two passengers, among whom are George Wilkes, Esq., of Wilkes' *Spirit of the Times*, and several of the directors of the company. She steamed the entire passage, ranging from 254 to 333 miles per twenty-four hours. The engines were not stopped until she was off George's Shoal, for soundings. She came in a route southeast, direct to the Lightship, where she was boarded by our ship-news collector and Mr. John Van Dusen, of pilot-boat *Washington* No. 4, a business partner of Admiral Murphy, who went out to Southampton for the ship. She was received on reaching the Lightship by Captain Cosgrove, with a salute and a dipping of colors, and as the mist blew away all the vessels in sight set their bunting and cheered her. She is drawing twenty-seven feet water aft, and will be trimmed to an even keel before crossing.”

From one of the passengers we obtained the following information: There were thirty-eight passengers and eight guests, all in the best of health, and have been so during the entire voyage, which has been a particularly fine one and full of interest. It has demonstrated the *Great Eastern's* superiority as a seagoing vessel, and the excellent reliability of her machinery. The highest speed attained was fourteen and a half knots.

---

## ARRIVAL OF THE "GREAT EASTERN"

---

The ship's bottom is very foul, and an allowance of at least two knots an hour should be made on that account. The distance from Southampton, as usually steamed, is 3,190 miles, but to avoid the ice she went farther south.

The only New York boat which had the honor of boarding the *Great Eastern*, with the exception of the yacht of the press, was the steam-tug *Achilles*. As the tug passed on her way from the dock down the upper bay, at an early hour in the morning, the masts of the monstrous steamer were first discerned raking the sky in a direction across Coney Island (above which they loomed like pillars on the vast desert of waters), and extending to Quarantine almost in a straight line. From the bluff at Fort Tompkins the view of the great steamer was splendid, the elevation at that point tending to raise and relieve her long black hull against the horizon of waters extending beyond.

As the boat passed through the Narrows a fleet of vessels of every description, from a steamer to the most insignificant craft that could carry a sail, was observed behind, coursing on like Flora Temples,<sup>2</sup> vieing with each other in their efforts to first reach and greet the *Great Eastern*. In fact, so crowded was the Narrows at one time with this fleet that the entrance to our noble harbor appeared one white spread sheet of canvas glistening in the sun, which shone during the whole time with great warmth and brilliancy. Passing Fort Hamilton her spars became more clearly visible over the vast expanse of waters, rising in the distance like a wooded islet in the

<sup>2</sup> Flora Temple was a noted race-horse of the period.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

winter, from the trees of which the cold breath of the frost had stript all their leaves, leaving it a stretch of black against the horizon.

Such was the appearance of the *Great Eastern* as seen at this time. Passing inside of Sandy Hook, her beautiful tapering masts still loomed above the bleak, sandy shore. Indeed, it seemed as if she was "irrepressible" from the time she anchored off the bar until her arrival in the city. While the boat remained inside the Hook the hull of the great vessel was invisible, consequently, when the point was turned, her monstrous proportions were brought the better into comparison by this sudden glimpse of her, and her immensity was for the first time truly realized.

As the *Achilles* crossed the neighborhood of the bar, the *Great Eastern*, which was lying stern and solemn in the distance, like a mighty monster of the deep, was observed to dip her ensign. The *Achilles* immediately responded by hoisting the American colors to the peak, and shortly afterward made for her in a straight course, reaching her about half past twelve o'clock. A small sloop was observed a few minutes before passing alongside, and under her bows. No better illustration could have been had of the immense size of the *Great Eastern* than this. The sloop first slowly crept along her whole length from stem to stern, the highest point of her mast reaching the lower portion of the vessel's bulwarks. Passing in front the great steamer's size was only the more clearly shown by the little speck of white which the sloop's sails displayed against the blue sky toward the east.

During this time the *Great Eastern* was sur-

---

## ARRIVAL OF THE "GREAT EASTERN"

---

rounded by a number of craft of all kinds, many of which, ships, barks, etc., outward bound, turned from their course to pass as near as possible and gaze upon her, the whole forming one beautiful, glistening, and ever changing scene, such as the eye seldom dwells upon. Another fact which we may here mention will show the great portions of the steamer. As the *Achilles* neared her, under a full head of steam, prophecies, which were doomed to prove false, were continually made by those on board as to the time she would be reached. They so proved, owing to her vast outline, which brought her apparently nearer the observer than she really was. Her majestic hull loomed up against the sky at a distance of five miles almost as clearly as the ordinary steamer at a distance of one.

On nearing and mooring alongside her great size was truly realized. The steamer affixt herself to one of the iron brackets near the wheelhouse, and from her deck, on gazing upward, it appeared like looking toward a housetop in our city, over the edge of which vast numbers were bending to watch the motions of the mimic pygmy boat below. Such was the height of the bulwarks that the smokepipe of the *Achilles*, the largest steam-tug in New York harbor, reached out slightly above the rail. Her immense steering apparatus, with eight men to work it, also struck the observer with peculiar wonder, as well as the systematic manner in which all orders from the forward deck to the stern were sent with the rapidity of a glance.

The British ensign, which had been hardly discernible, except as a speck, during the trip, made

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

its appearance at this moment, and its broad and immense folds were now brought into full view, waving broadly in the breeze, which blew strong and fresh from the southwest. The approach of the steam-tug caused no little sensation on board the *Great Eastern*, and heads were thrust over the rail of the bulwarks and from the cabin windows, the latter forming excellent impromptu photographs, appropriately framed by the iron panel work surrounding those apertures. These photographs, besides aiding in magnifying the vessel's proportions, appeared like miniatures when viewed from the deck of the *Achilles* beneath.

The *Great Eastern* had been advertised to sail from Southampton on Saturday, the 15th of June. Workmen were engaged on her up to five o'clock in the afternoon of that day, and before they could be disembarked, the weather, which had been stormy since noon, became thick and hazy, so that it was felt by the pilot that it would be dangerous to attempt taking so large a vessel through the intricate channel of the Solent in the uncertain light of the evening. She lay, therefore, at her moorings in Southampton water till Sunday morning. About seven o'clock orders were given to unshackle the mooring-chains. Such is the ponderous character of these cables that it was some forty-five minutes before this could be effected. Steam was admitted into the cylinders of the paddle engines about ten minutes past eight; shortly after the order was given, "easy ahead with the screw," and the *Great Eastern* steamed slowly out on her first voyage to sea.

## THE VISIT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES (KING EDWARD VII)

(1860)

### A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT<sup>1</sup>

Without accident the royal party reached Washington about four o'clock (October 3d). A crowd of thousands of persons, preserving the most excellent order, received the prince at the depot with the heartiest cheers which he has received in this country. A railing was erected around the entrance to the car, and none but officials—not even reporters—were admitted inside. General Cass, the Secretary of State, accompanied by James Buchanan and James Buchanan Henry, the nephews of the President, received the Prince at the cars. In a brief speech Secretary Cass express the delight and pleasure which it afforded him personally, and as the representative of the President, to welcome the Prince of Wales to Washington. The Prince replied by bowing and extending his hand. The Duke of Newcastle and the Prince's suite were then introduced.

The Prince and party entered the President's carriages, and were driven directly to the White House. At first the carriages had some difficulty in passing through the crowd, but a lane was opened and they were heartily cheered. During

<sup>1</sup> As reported in the *New York Herald*, October 4, 6, 7, 12, 18, 16, 1860. The Prince had come to the United States by way of Canada, entering at Detroit and going thence to Chicago and Washington.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

the ride the Prince attentively observed the city, and looked with much apparent interest at the public buildings pointed out by General Cass. At the White House the royal party were introduced to the President by Secretary Cass, and then by the President to Miss Lane.<sup>2</sup> Five of the suite, including the Duke of Newcastle and the Earl of St. Germain, remain there. The rest will be the guests of Lord Lyons.<sup>3</sup> The introduction was purely formal, the President receiving the Prince as a private gentleman.

At six o'clock a grand dinner was given by the President, at which the members of the Cabinet and their ladies, Lord Lyons and his Secretary of Legation, Mrs. Senator Slidell, and several other lady friends of the President, were present, the whole company numbering about twenty. The table was most elegantly decorated. In the center, upon a large golden tray, were seven richly ornamented golden vases, the extreme vases being in filagree and the sides of the tray of lattice work. These were filled with beautiful artificial flowers and grasses. Around these were bouquets of natural flowers in splendid vases, and the appearance of the table, with these decorations and its rich service, was superb. The Prince sat on the right of Miss Lane, at the side of the table and opposite the President, at whose right sat the Duke of Newcastle. . . .

At ten o'clock this morning (October 5th), the Prince, with Miss Lane, the President and Lord

<sup>2</sup> Harriet Lane, the President's niece, and mistress of the White House.

<sup>3</sup> The British Minister.

---

## THE VISIT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

---

Lyons, started for Mount Vernon, the suite, among which was Sir Henry Holland, the Queen's physician, following in carriages to the dock, where the cutter *Harriet Lane* was prepared for the party. About forty-five persons embarked, among whom were several members of the Cabinet and Mesdames Slidell, Givin, Ledyard, Riggs and others, and the Hon. Augustus Schell, of New York.

The voyage up occupied only a hour and a half. Upon landing the party inspected the entire grounds and gardens most attentively. The Prince and royal party were deeply observant, asking many questions, and apparently were much impressed with the feelings natural to the occasion. Mrs. Riggs, vice-regent of the Mount Vernon Association, acted as chaperon, and the rule excluding all other visitors, altho Friday was the regular visiting day, was rigidly observed, the regular steamers postponing their trips till to-morrow. . . .

At the request of the Mount Vernon Association, the Prince planted, with but little formality, a young horse-chestnut tree, to commemorate his visit to the place. The tree was planted upon a beautiful little mound, not far from the tomb. This ceremony being over, the party again stood for a few moments before the tomb, and then turning away in thoughtful silence, slowly and silently retraced their way to the *Harriet Lane*, which during their absence had been transformed, by means of canvas and gay flags, into a beautiful dining saloon, with covers laid for the entire party. . . .

On the arrival in New York of the *Harriet*

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

*Lane* (October 11th), alongside the pier there was a general rush in the gallery for front seats, while the cheering on the several vessels in the bay—which were decorated in all their bravery—announced the event to those inside Castle Garden. At half past two, the Prince and his suite entered Castle Garden from the water entrance. He had on his left Lord Lyons and the Earl of St. Germain, and the Duke of Newcastle on his right. He was drest in a blue frock coat, gray trousers, and “garrote” shirt-collar. . . .

In accordance with the program, as soon as a review in the park had been completed, the Prince, suite, and followers proceeded along Broadway to the Fifth Avenue Hotel. To convey an accurate idea of the crowd, which next to the Prince, was the great curiosity of the day, would be impossible. It was huge, immense, enormous, stupendous, infinite and indefinite. It was a multitude countless as the leaves of the forest—one of those crushes which are perfectly bewildering to the senses. A stratum of humanity was so wedged in and macadamized together that, to move one individual, was to stir the whole mass. Every window-sill was a rough frame, within which the faces of beautiful women and smiling children made up an attractive picture. Every opening, every story, every roof was a parapet, from which constantly played a battery of bright eyes. Every available place was occupied, and where circumstances naturally failed to provide accommodations, ingenuity brought into requisition boxes, benches, tables, and any other appliance that would effect the desired object. As an illustration of the extent to which this species

---

## THE VISIT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

---

of invention was carried, we saw standing on the narrow ledge of the first story of a house, a place not much wider than the heel of one's boot, two young men, who maintained their position by means of a rope passed around their bodies, and going thence inside the building through the windows on either side.

Those who could not enjoy the privilege of a window were content to take to the street, and the quantity of well-drest ladies and children, mixed in with the not over fragrant crowd of unscoured publicans and sinners, was painfully amazing to behold. Once in, it was almost impossible to get out. The poor women were compelled to endure the pains of purgatory to gratify the curiosity they couldn't resist. Even side streets were made use of. Here vehicles of various kinds were prest into service and speedily crowded with human beings.

For the "Diamond Ball" (October 12th), a magnificent apartment, comprising the parquette of the Academy of Music, and embracing the stage, was provided. As arranged, it was 135 feet in length by 68 feet in breadth. The ends toward the stage were arranged in semicircular form, while toward the other end were placed three superb couches, the central one for the Prince himself, those on either side for his suite. A supper-room was especially erected for the occasion on ground between the Academy and Medical College. In length it was 144 feet by 28 feet in breadth. Connecting with the ballroom and the supper-room was a passage facing on Fourteenth Street, 154 feet in length and 24 feet in breadth. This passage was covered with stout

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

scarlet cloth, as were other parts of the building, including the ball and supper-rooms. The carpet, 500 yards in amount, was especially dyed for the occasion, as there had not been a sufficient quantity in the city for the purpose. Twenty brass chandeliers, each containing six burners, were suspended from the roof, making a brilliant display. The building, the temporary, was constructed in a manner which would have befitted a more permanent edifice. The arrangements for ventilation were perfect. In the center was a tower, rising some forty feet from the level of the street, while two dormer windows were placed at each end.

The entire building was draped in alternate strips of pink and white muslin, with large mirrors intervening. These were twenty-four in number, and made a splendid show. Along the supper-room were parallel tables, from end to end. They were brilliant in all the appointments of gold, silver and china. At the upper end was the Prince's table, raised on a dias, semicircular in form, at which the Prince and his immediate suite were placed. Back of the table were three magnificent mirrors, reflecting and flashing the lights. The center glass in particular was lofty and magnificent. The flooring of this room was not carpeted in scarlet, but in squares, in the center of each a cornucopia, with a red border. This had a very pleasing effect. All around the room were flags, arranged in graceful festoons of red, white and blue, emblematic of America and Great Britain.

On leaving the ballroom for the supper-room, a passage of considerable length was traversed, as already mentioned; but at the entrances from

---

## THE VISIT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

---

the one to the other were placed a number of figures of ancient knights in armor, supposed to represent all previous Princes of Wales. Among them was the celebrated Black Prince, who displayed his bravery on the bloody fields of Poictiers and Cressy, and entered London with two kings as his prisoners, namely, the King of France and the King of Scotland. It was a strange thing, in that temple of democracy, to witness such things as knights and princes, done up in all the panoply of the Middle Ages. Around these entrances were hung battle-axes, spears, shields, and other implements suggestive of the age of the Crusaders.

The Academy gained the only additional attraction it needed when it gained a large, richly-drest crowd. At half past seven o'clock the first of the company began to arrive, at first singly, then in crowds of four, five and six, and at last in a continuous stream of black coats and superb dresses. At first the floor, then the parquette, the dress circle, the upper tiers, the lobbies, the dressing-rooms, were completely filled. The first arrivals were the gentlemen of the committee of arrangements. Then came the bands, in uniform, who took their places in the second tier. Then the policemen, at first drawn up in platoons and afterward stationed along the lobbies and the several entrances, where their onerous duties were quietly but efficiently performed. Then came the guests, wandering curiously around the vast spaces. Soon the crowd became great; the dressing-rooms were closed, promenaders left the supper-room and circled the building, the band struck up a favorite air, and conversation began.

---

## GREAT EPOCHS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

---

The Academy, at ten o'clock, was filled. Those who arrived later sank unregarded into the throng, like rain-drops into the ocean. The private boxes were occupied by those who preferred to overlook the brilliant assemblage which moved restlessly beneath. Beneath thousands of gas-lights the crowds surged backward and forward, shifting and changing like the figures in a kaleidoscope, or like the ocean rippling beneath gentle winds and bright sunshine. But there was no jam, for a "jam" expresses a fixt, immovable body of persons; this was rather a throng, mobile, variable, versatile, fickle, quick, changing—sea of heads, but besides a sea of colors, the light flashing back from the gayest and richest of dresses, from pearly white shoulders and brilliant complexions, from jewels iris-hued and rivaling in brightness the eyes which flashed above them.

The full-dress black coats absorbed the superfluous light and softened the blaze of a thousand lamps. Rich military uniforms, ornamented with golden lace and epaulettes, relieved the uniformity of the gentlemen's toilettes. The throng seemed to diminish the size of the house, and yet, by a common but singular paradox, aided one to appreciate its great extent. Filled, but not jammed, crowded, but with plenty of room for all to move comfortably and without disturbance—for separate entrances were reserved for egress and ingress—the Academy was now ready for the ball to begin.

END OF VOL. VII

UNIV. OF MICHIGAN,

MAY 2 19

\_\_\_\_\_

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
GRADUATE LIBRARY

DATE DUE

---

		
---	--	--

---